# WHAT THINK YE OF THE GOSPELS?

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# WHAT THINK YE OF THE GOSPELS?

"*That thou mayest have additional assurance of the correctness of those* Logoi, *concerning which thou hast been instructed.*"—LUKE i. 4.

"*The former* Logos *have I written unto thee.*"—ACTS i. 1.

"*Hold fast the exact form of the sound* Logoi."—2 TIM. i. 13.

"*As new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the* Logos, *that ye may grow thereby.*"—1 PET. xi. 2.

# WHAT THINK YE OF THE GOSPELS?

*A HANDBOOK OF GOSPEL STUDY*

BY THE

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# UNITY IN DIVERSITY

The evidence given in the following pages will show that there is an almost incredible similarity between all the different parts of the Fourfold Gospel record.

How is such close and sustained similarity to be reconciled with the existence of that endless and multiform variety which is one of the most characteristic features of the Gospel story?

May we not answer, that in all great works Unity in Diversity is ever the sign of the highest excellence, alike of conception and execution?

The similarity is simply due to the as-nearly-as-possible uniform adoption by all four writers of the same principles of narration, whilst the variety is the necessary effect of these principles being constantly applied to widely different circumstances.

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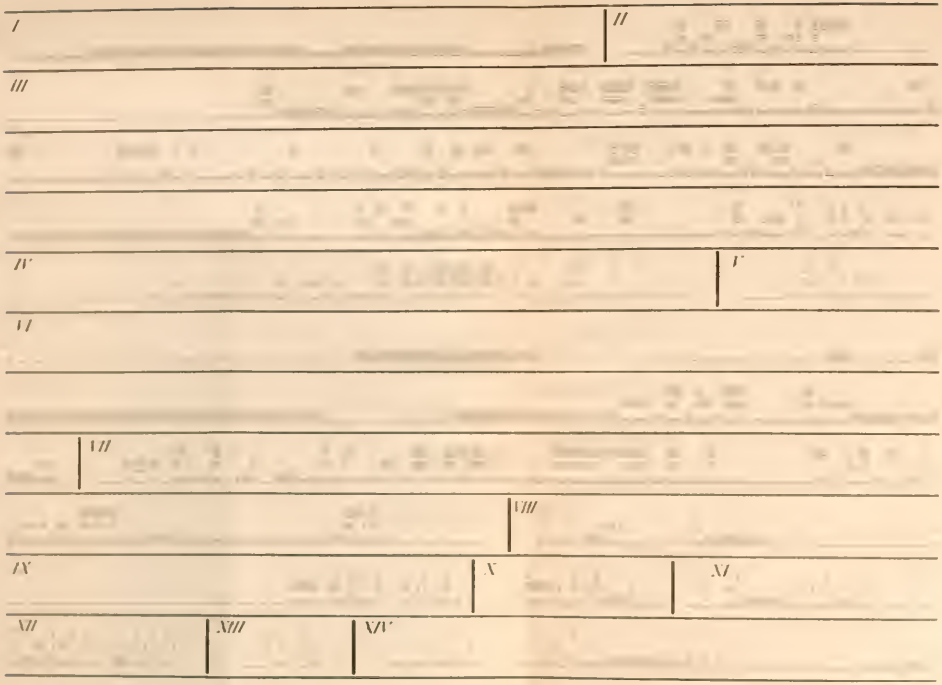

## DIAGRAM: EXPLANATION AND REFERENCES

1 line = St. John.
2 lines = St. Matthew.
3 lines = St. Mark.
4 lines = St. Luke.

Scale—30 verses to 1 inch.

The lowest stratum represents—

(*a*) Matter found in one Gospel only; and

(*b*) Matter which, according to the assumed sequence, first occurs in the Gospel indicated.

The upper strata represent the repetitions made by subsequent writers.

In Section III. the order of events given by St. Matthew is adapted to that given by St. Mark and St. Luke.

*N.B.*—Luke xi. 14–xiii. 21 has been removed from Section VI. and placed (after Luke viii. 21) in Section III. But for this alteration Sections III., IV., V., and VI. would all be mixed up together.

## SECTIONS

I

*THE INCARNATION, BIRTH, AND EARLY LIFE OF JESUS*

St. John i. 1–5. St. Matthew i. and ii. St. Luke i. and ii.
*No repetition.*

II

*THE MINISTRY OF THE BAPTIST*

St. John i. 6–34. St. Matthew iii. 1–iv. 11. St. Mark i. 1–13.
St. Luke iii. 1–iv. 13.

III

*FROM THE MINISTRY OF THE BAPTIST TO THE FEEDING OF THE FIVE THOUSAND*

St. John i. 35–vi. 21. St. Matthew iv. 12–xiv. 34. St. Mark i. 14–vi. 53. St. Luke iv. 14–ix. 17 and xi. 14–xiii. 21 inserted after viii. 21.

IV

*FROM THE FEEDING OF THE FIVE THOUSAND TO OUR LORD'S FINAL VISIT TO CAPERNAUM*

St. John vi. 22–vii. 1. St. Matthew xiv. 35–xvii. 23. St. Mark vi. 54–ix. 33. St. Luke ix. 18–45.

V

*JESUS' FINAL VISIT TO CAPERNAUM*

St. John vii. 2–11. St. Matthew xvii. 24–xviii. 35. St. Mark ix. 33–50. St. Luke ix. 46–50.

VI

*FROM LAST VISIT TO CAPERNAUM TO LAST VISIT TO JERUSALEM*

St. John vii. 12–xi. 55. St. Matthew xix. 1–xx. 34. St. Mark x. 1–52. St. Luke ix. 51–xix. 27, omitting xi. 14–xiii. 21.

VII

*FROM THE FINAL ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM TO THE LAST SUPPER*

St. John xi. 55–xii. 50. St. Matthew xxi. 1–xxvi. 16. St. Mark xi. 1–xiv. 11. St. Luke xix. 28–xxii. 6.

VIII

*THE LAST SUPPER*

St. John xiii. 1–xiv. 31. St. Matthew xxvi. 17–30. St. Mark xiv. 12–26. St. Luke xxii. 7–39.

IX

*FROM THE LAST SUPPER TO OUR LORD'S ARREST*

St. John xv. 1–xviii. 11. St. Matthew xxvi. 30–56. St. Mark xiv. 26–52. St. Luke xxii. 39–53.

X

*FROM OUR LORD'S ARREST TILL EARLY MORNING*

St. John xviii. 12–27. St. Matthew xxvi. 57–xxvii. 10. St. Mark xiv. 53–xv. 1. St. Luke xxii. 54–xxiii. 1.

XI

*THE TRIAL BEFORE PILATE*

St. John xviii. 28–xix. 16. St. Matthew xxvii. 11–31. St. Mark xv. 2–20. St. Luke xxiii. 2–25.

XII

*THE CRUCIFIXION*

St. John xix. 17–30. St. Matthew xxvii. 32–56. St. Mark xv. 21–41. St. Luke xxiii. 26–49.

XIII

*THE BURIAL*

St. John xix. 31–42. St. Matthew xxvii. 57–61. St. Mark xv. 42–47. St. Luke xxiii. 50–56.

XIV

*THE RESURRECTION AND SUBSEQUENT APPEARANCES*

St. John xx. and xxi. St. Matthew xxvii. 62 and xxviii. St. Mark xvi. St. Luke xxiv.

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## THE APOSTOLIC CONSTITUTIONS

The *Apostolic Constitutions* are included by Epiphanius in a list of the Scriptures, though he elsewhere speaks of their scriptural authority as doubtful. (See *Bampton Lectures*, 1890, p. 117.)

"Let a deacon or elder read the Gospels which we, I, Matthew, and John, have handed over to you, and which the fellow-labourers of Paul, Mark, and Luke, having received by hearsay, left to you."

Here St. John's Gospel is affirmed to have been presented to the Church during the lifetime of St. Matthew. (See evidence of *Muratorian Canon*, p. 96, and of Papias and Tertullian, Appendix VII. and VIII.)

## IRENÆUS

As against the Montanists who rejected St. John's Gospel, and so by reducing the number of the Gospels destroyed their fourfold character, Irenæus argues that any one who does not admit the quadriform construction of the Gospels is "an empty-headed and impertinent ignoramus" (*vani et indocti et insuper audaces*), and that he destroys alike "the Gospel and the Prophetic Spirit." (*A. H.* iii. xi. 8 and 9.)

Like Eusebius (see p. 6), Irenæus assumed that St. John's Gospel was the last written, and that the constructive relation which the Synoptic Gospels bore to it must have been wholly miraculous.

## CHRYSOSTOM

"And, like as if thou shouldest take any part from the side of an animal, even in that part thou shouldest find all the things out of which the whole is composed,—nerves and veins, bones, arteries, and blood, *and a sample, so to speak, of the whole lump*,—so likewise [in the Gospels] in each portion of what is stated one may see the connection of the whole clearly appearing."—Hom. on Matt. i.

By substituting words for verses any one can construct a diagram showing the exact construction of any of the sixteen shorter "samples" dealt with in the following pages. Such diagram will in every case exactly reproduce all the main characteristics of a diagram, (*a*) of the history as a whole, (*b*) of each sectional history, and (*c*) of each fourfold narrative. Every diagram will then be "a sample, so to speak, of the whole lump."

## A CRUCIAL DIFFERENCE

Define the difference between (A) the Synopticism of Irenæus or Eusebius, and (B) the Synopticism of the nineteenth century.

A was combined with, whilst B is divorced from, what would generally be held to be a wholly exaggerated view of Inspiration.

Synoptist A, though he placed St. John's Gospel last, did not thereby separate it from its companion Gospels. Thus by a mental *tour-de-force* he was able to recognise all the then well-known constructive facts of the four documents without any reference to the order in which they were placed.

Synoptist B, on the other hand, by placing St. John's Gospel last entirely separates it from the other Gospels, and so obliterates and virtually renders non-existent all the constructive facts which bind the three and the one together. Thus when he seeks to discover the relation of the several Gospels to each other, he is like a man groping in the dark, and not even knowing what it is he is searching for.

# INTRODUCTION

I HAVE for many years made the constructive facts of the complete Gospel record a subject of special study.

In the first instance I aimed at proving that the only true harmony of the Gospels must necessarily be inherent in the documents themselves, *i.e.* a harmony to be verified, not created. In other words, I held that any harmony arrived at by arbitrary alterations of the original text was worse than useless, and that, consequently, no alterations of the text were admissible unless they could be clearly traced to some probable or demonstrable alteration of the original manuscripts.

The light which this investigation seemed to me to throw upon the whole subject, led me to a further and closer examination of its details.

The result of this examination may be embodied in the following conclusions:—

1. That the popular idea of the fragmentary construction of the Gospels, and their want of sustained and close adjustment to each other, was an error.

2. That the construction of the Gospel record is everywhere of a distinctly fourfold character.

3. That in every history, every incident, and every detail, there are signs of the closest union.

4. That each successive writer must have known what his predecessor, or predecessors, had already narrated.

5. That in order to avoid the once current but unnecessary theory, that this was the result of the miraculous intervention of the Holy Spirit, it is essential that we should place that Gospel which is universally allowed to contain the most

prominent teaching of Christianity and its Founder in the most prominent position, namely, first.

In a former work I traced the processes by which I myself was irresistibly led to these conclusions. In the following pages I propose to show the means which I have since taken to verify them.

I propose then—

1. To break up the whole Gospel record into as many complete samples of the joint authorship of four writers as it can be made to furnish; and

2. To show that in every one of these samples the Evangelists have adopted a closely similar principle and method of narration.

I must first ask the reader to give at least a momentary glance at the Diagram prefixed to these pages.

To all intents and purposes it is a facsimile of Gospel construction.

The order of the Gospels I have taken to be John, Matthew, Mark, Luke: the first being represented by a single line, the second by two, and so on.

Original matter, that is to say, matter which occurs first in any particular writer, according to our sequence, is placed as the lowest stratum. All matter repeated is then represented by the upper strata.

It is obvious that in whatever order we assume the Gospels to have been produced, the constructive facts must remain the same. All that our assumption decides is—(*a*) to which of the writers originality is in any given case to be attributed, and (*b*) the sequence in which the events were orginally related.

It will be at once seen that the two facts which our diagram demonstrates most clearly are—

1. That the method of Gospel construction is everywhere of a fourfold character; and

2. That this fourfold method of construction applies not only to the history as a whole, but to all its parts, and is therefore of continual recurrence.

Thus it naturally suggests the plan of examining the whole record by samples.

In doing this I have first divided the main history into fourteen sections; I have next taken ten separate fourfold

narratives; and then, to make the examination as complete as possible, have isolated sixteen shorter fourfold statements or portions of narratives.

We thus get forty complete samples of the joint-authorship of four writers. For all practical purposes these are as much independent specimens of authorship as if we had forty separate documents, each of which was the work of four writers acting in concert.

In order to enable the reader to verify the alleged mechanical similarity between these samples, I have given in an Appendix both a subject and a verbal analysis of each group of samples.

I shall also show—

1. That the same definition applies to each of the samples.
2. That the same branches of evidence are illustrated in each of them.
3. That in no fewer than fifteen crucial particulars the same method of analysis yields closely corresponding results in every sample.
4. That in every sample the Synoptists omit and repeat Johannean subjects in the same systematic, though intensely unique, manner.
5. That in all these samples there is not even a solitary instance in which a priority either of time or importance can be assigned to either of the Synoptic Gospels.

To enable the reader still further to verify these statements for himself, I shall also place before him the main constructive facts which each sample in turn presents to us.

We may safely say that apart from design, *i.e.* according to the ordinary laws of probability, such extraordinary and multitudinous ramifications of similarity as we shall be able to define could not possibly exist even in any two independent samples of construction.

How wholly incredible it would be that this same similarity should be found apart from design in every one of forty samples, I leave to the common sense of the reader to judge.

# CHAPTER I

## THE SAME DEFINITION APPLIES WITH EQUAL EXACTNESS TO EVERY ONE OF FORTY SAMPLES OF THE JOINT AUTHORSHIP OF FOUR WRITERS

In my former work I endeavoured to prove that St. John's Gospel must certainly have been the first written, and that the other three Gospels were based upon and grew out of St. John's in a very unusual but perfectly natural manner.

An Oxford critic[1] has pointed out that this contention is based entirely upon a statement or definition of what the several Evangelists have done, and must therefore stand or fall by the correctness of such definition.

I will now restate this definition, and show that it applies, not only to the Gospel record as a whole, but to every one of its component parts, *i.e.* to every one of our samples.

The definition I formulate as follows:—"St. John and St. Matthew always divide the historical area between them, and deal with two distinct sides of their common subject. St. Mark and St. Luke always deal with the same side of the subject as St. Matthew. At the same time, as an almost invariable rule, they treat St. John's Gospel just as St. Matthew treats it, *i.e.* whatever parts of St. John's Gospel St. Matthew leaves out they leave out, and whatever parts St. Matthew repeats they repeat."

As to the exact extent to which this definition applies to every one of our samples, the reader will readily be able to satisfy himself.

In strict accordance with the definition, it will be found to

[1] The Rev. F. W. Bussell, Fellow of Brazenose College, *Expository Times*, May 1892.

be a matter of verifiable fact that St. John always records one half—the word being used in a broad sense—of every sample, whilst the three Synoptists, taken collectively, record the other half.

Thus in every sample there is always a Johannean half and a Synoptic half of the history which it comprises. At the same time, the Synoptic half necessarily varies according as St. Matthew has either entirely or only partially omitted St. John's narrative. Where St. Matthew entirely omits St. John's record, the effect of St. Mark and St. Luke doing the same is that the Synoptic half is entirely independent of the Johannean. The two halves do in fact cover different ground, and deal, not with the same, but successive periods of time. On the other hand, where St. Matthew reproduces portions of St. John as the basis of his own narrative, the effect of St. Mark and St. Luke doing the same is that the whole Synoptic half always contains a larger or smaller Johannean element. Here both of the two halves cover the same ground, though in a different manner.

All, then, that our definition really does is to explain this mutual one-sidedness on the part of St. John's Gospel taken separately, and of the Synoptic Gospels taken collectively.

If St. John's and St. Matthew's Gospels had stood alone, their mutual one-sidedness, *i.e.* their forming two sides of the same history, would have been patent to the most casual observer.

Equally so would it have been if St. John had stood alone with either St. Mark's or St. Luke's Gospel.

The fact which we are apt to overlook is this: as the three Synoptic Gospels all stand in the same relation to St. John's Gospel, if one of them forms a second half to St. John's record the other two necessarily do the same.

Merely because they are taken collectively, they do not for that reason lose a relationship to St. John's Gospel, which is a *de facto* peculiarity of each of them taken separately.

That the relationship must have been an original relationship in the case of one of the Synoptic Gospels, and that through this one a derived relationship extended to the other two, seems to me a self-evident fact.

Supposing this relationship between St. John and the

Synoptists can be established, the explanation of it will be an altogether independent question.

If St. John wrote first, it would manifestly be explainable in a perfectly natural and simple manner. There could then have been no reason why St. Matthew should not have supplied, as he has done, what St. John omitted, nor could there have been any reason why St. Mark and St. Luke should not, as they have done, enlarge upon St. Matthew's record, and yet, in their intense respect for St. John's Gospel, treat it as far as possible just as he treated it.

If, on the other hand, at the time when the Synoptists wrote, St. John's Gospel was yet in the womb of time, the only logical and scientific conclusion would be that the late-early Church must have been right in assuming that the facts could not be otherwise than miraculous. The Synoptists must all with one consent have left out, not only in the history as a whole, but in all its component parts, the most intrinsically important half of the history,—and that simply because they knew that it was "reserved by the Divine Spirit for St. John as for a superior."[1]

Eusebius links the inspiration of the Synoptists and the date of St. John's Gospel together as cause and effect. We have rejected the cause, and are surprised that our attempt to retain the effect—the date and position of St. John's Gospel—has involved us in inextricable confusion.

All I contend is—

1. That there can be no possible reason for attributing the relation between the Synoptists and St. John to supernatural causes when it can be perfectly well explained by natural causes; and

2. That the two statements of Eusebius must either stand or fall together, and that to attempt to reject the cause and to accept the effect is to expect that a house will stand after the only basis on which it ever rested, or ever could rest, has been knocked away.

[1] *E. H.* Bk. iii. c. 24.

## CHAPTER II

### THE SAME BRANCHES OF EVIDENCE EQUALLY APPLICABLE TO EVERY ONE OF FORTY SAMPLES OF THE JOINT AUTHORSHIP OF FOUR WRITERS

THE conditions of an investigation which claims to be of a strictly scientific character are necessarily to the last degree stringent.

Let us pause for a moment to see what in the present case these conditions are.

It will be admitted that, having regard to the comparatively limited area of observation, there is probably no department of scientific study which supplies a larger number of separate and often apparently contradictory facts than the Holy Gospels.

These facts can readily be divided into some six branches of evidence.

Each of such branches will then include facts numbered by the thousand, and contributed in about equal proportions by each of four writers.

Now it is clear that a very considerable number of these facts taken separately may admit of being explained in various and, provided the remaining facts are not taken in, very plausible ways.

But a scientific explanation has to account, not for a given number of selected facts, but for all the facts.

Out of the, say, 10,000 facts to be accounted for there literally must not be one which is inconsistent with the explanation put forward. They need not, and indeed could not, all suggest the explanation; but that they should be consistent with it, is an absolute necessity of the case.

There must, of course, always be a limited number of

exceptional facts which will have to be excluded at least from a first investigation, as, for instance, where a difficulty is created by various or conflicting readings in the text of our manuscripts, or again where parallel narratives cannot even be intelligently discussed until the previous question, whether the writers had seen each other's writings, has been settled.

Apart, then, from these rare and wholly exceptional cases, the condition which our inquiry has to fulfil is—

1. That every one of our branches of evidence should point to absolutely the same conclusions; and

2. That these conclusions should be capable of explaining all the facts of the case, no matter how superficially contradictory they may at first sight appear.

A critic of my former work has certified that in his opinion "the positions taken are supported by evidence of every kind, the evidence of subject, of variations, of additions and omissions, of repetitions, of arrangement, of construction"; and, further, that

"This new theory, at first sight very startling, places the authenticity of John on an unassailable foundation, and makes the other Gospels, miscalled Synoptic, to be not mere fragmentary collections, but deliberately planned and carefully executed works" (*Expository Times*, May 1893).

Both these statements are intended to apply to the explanation which I have already given of the construction of the Gospel history as a whole. What I am anxious to show now is, that we can go a great deal further than this, and that even a very cursory study of the evidences will show that both statements are true, not only of the construction of the history as a whole, but of every sample of construction which that history can be made to render.

To a great extent our diagram and tables would enable the reader to verify this statement. But the task will be easier still if, in the first instance, he has at least a general impression of the exact character of each of the branches of evidence into which our facts may be grouped.

I will therefore briefly enumerate these.

The Evidence of Subject claims our first attention. Not only is it in itself of the highest evidential value, but it clearly dominates every other branch of evidence. For each Evan-

gelist has manifestly done what he has done with the single view of presenting the particular aspect of the common subject in the manner best suited to his own purpose in writing.

The evidence of subject requires us to examine—

1. The manner in which the main incidents of the history are distributed amongst the several Evangelists; and

2. The manner in which, when all four Evangelists deal with the same incident, the details of such incident are distributed amongst them.

We shall, of course, have to go still further and examine also the way in which in turn the details of incidents are themselves treated. But this can be done most effectually when we come to deal with the evidence of variations.

Evidently the first point on which we shall need to satisfy ourselves is whether the same method of distribution and allocation which has been adopted with regard to the incidents has also been adopted with regard to the details of incidents.

The importance of settling this question is far greater than might at first sight appear.

If each Evangelist has chosen his own set of incidents and dealt with them in a wholly independent manner, his choice of subjects might represent either the limits of his own knowledge or a cycle of teaching with which he was himself familiar, or even the range of his own sympathies. Under such circumstances it would be at least conceivable that save for a comman bond, whether of general tradition or of some common original document, the Gospels might have been produced quite independently of each other. The manner in which the incidents were distributed might raise a strong presumption against this view, but it might still appear that on the whole it was the most tenable theory which could be advanced. If, however, we can show that precisely the same method of distribution which applies to the main incidents of the history applies also to the details of these incidents, the whole case assumes a totally different aspect.

Clearly an explanation which might cover the supposed fact of each Evangelist being acquainted with a particular set of main incidents, and with no others, would not cover the further fact of his always being acquainted with only a

particular set of details connected with the same incidents. The presumption of knowledge and design, which can never be wholly separated from the first fact, is so confirmed by the second as to become, apart from all other evidences, an absolute certainty.

That, as a matter of fact, the distribution of details is regulated by the same principles as that of incidents, will be sufficiently indicated by the tables printed in the Appendix.

But the more detailed study of this branch of evidence will furnish a still further proof in the same direction.

It is especially observable that in the case of details their distribution is continually determined by the extent to which they have to do either with our Lord Himself personally, or with subordinate actors in the scenes described. Thus St. John alone records the command, "Gather up the fragments." The Synoptists only record the fulfilment of the command. If we place St. John last, we have to suppose that all three Synoptists in turn not only leave out the originating command, but do this at the expense of leading their readers to suppose that the idea of acting as they did originated with the disciples themselves.

The same thing is constantly observable as between St. Matthew and the other two Synoptists.

For instance, in giving an account of the healing of the paralytic at Capernaum, St. Matthew merely speaks of Jesus "seeing their faith"; the other two Synoptists alone tell of the four bearers, and of the manner in which their faith was exhibited.

The instances of this principle of narration are simply endless. But we shall seek in vain for instances of the reverse process, *i.e.* in which the non-Apostolic Evangelists concentrate attention upon our Lord, whilst the Apostolic Evangelists concentrate it on subordinate actors.

What may be termed the ideality of each Gospel will, of course, be patent to the most ordinary observer. St. John always deals according to his avowed intention with matters essentially personal to our Lord and with His doctrinal teaching.

St. Matthew deals altogether with the more historical side of his subject, with our Lord's moral teaching, and with the kingdom which He proposed to establish.

St. Mark supplies historical, circumstantial, and ministerial details.

St. Luke, whilst he always aims at completing the historical picture, ever represents our Lord as engaged in active ministerial labours. At the same time the character of the incidents which he relates continually serve to bring into prominence the fulness and all-embracing character of the Gospel message. St. Mark and St. Luke both dwell with far greater fulness than the Apostolic Evangelists upon everything which concerned the future conduct and fortunes of the disciples.

The object which each Evangelist thus shows that he had in writing could not but continually affect, not only his choice of incidents in the main history, but his choice of details when he had to reintroduce the same incident as a previous writer.

THE EVIDENCE OF CONSTRUCTION is from a purely mechanical point of view sufficiently represented by our diagram.

This evidence proves that, though at irregular intervals, and under continually varying conditions, the same plan of fourfold construction is continually reproduced.

There are two points which it is specially important to observe.

1. Each Gospel is not a continuous narrative, but a selection of narratives. In no case does the mere fact of one narrative following closely upon another necessarily indicate, as it would in an ordinary document, any immediate sequence of time. On the contrary, not only are there continual historical lacunæ between the narratives, but these lacunæ are of continually varying length.

Thus it is only when we consider the incidents, apart from the way in which they may be repeated, that we can see, as in our diagram, how the narratives of one Gospel fit into the lacunæ of other Gospels.

It has been said that to attempt to form a harmony of the Gospels must necessarily produce "a mosaic of disjointed fragments."

This has, of course, been urged in disparagement of all such attempts.

But the saying is not only literally true, but the truth of it lies at the very root of any true conception of the *de facto* relation in which the Gospels stand to each other.

As a matter of fact, each Gospel is in construction much more allied to a collection of the separate articles of a creed than to a continuous history.

These articles, so far as they are repeated and separately treated, we have to study in turn. That they do, as a matter of fact when duly arranged, furnish us with a consecutive composite history, is merely the result of the extreme care with which all questions of historical sequence have been treated.

As it is in each Gospel with regard to the incidents of the main history, so it is again with regard to the details of such incidents as are the subject of reintroduction. We can never assume such continuity in any narrative as would prevent our inserting in their proper place any such further details as a second, third, or fourth writer may supply.

Here again the composite history must necessarily be "a mosaic of disjointed fragments," albeit in every case a mosaic of incomparable beauty.

2. The next point which we have to observe is that all samples of Gospel construction fall into one or other of two classes, *i.e.* their construction is regulated either (*a*) by the fact that the Synoptic writers omit what St. John has related, or (*b*) by the fact that they to a greater or less extent repeat what he has recorded. In the one case, the Johannean and the Synoptic halves of the section are wholly independent. In the other, they are more or less concurrent.

The division of the history between St. John and St. Matthew is always regulated by the extent to which St. John did or did not treat the subject in hand exhaustively. St. John avowed his intention of making such a selection from the materials at his disposal, as would suffice for the double purpose of proving Jesus to be the Christ, the Son of God, and to provide by this means an adequate basis of saving faith.

Such a history would naturally consist, not only of the most important parts of the history itself, but of the most important details of such parts of the history as St. John did not find it necessary to deal with exhaustively.

Thus St. John's avowed principle of selection, not only obliged him to omit a large number of incidents in the

main history, but an equally large proportion of the details of the incidents which he does chronicle. Hence he not only left lacunæ in the main history, but no less conspicuous lacunæ in his record of the great crises of the history.

These lacunæ St. Matthew everywhere fills in. It is therefore by the extent and character of these lacunæ that St. Matthew's contribution to the history is regulated.

We see then that St. John's and St. Matthew's records taken together always make up a complete twofold primary representation of our Lord's ministry and teaching. They leave much unrecorded, but so far as they go they are completeness and simplicity itself. There is absolutely no room in any one of our samples, either for misunderstanding or adverse criticism.

It is true that the subordination of St. Matthew's Gospel to that of St. John is of the most marked character. But if St. John, when he wrote, really had the field so entirely open to him as he implies, and if, as he states, his Gospel was intended to be essentially the creed-material Gospel, how could any other record be otherwise than subordinate to his, and that even in the most marked degree?

With regard to the non-Apostolic Gospels of St. Mark and St. Luke, when we have once ascertained that the framework of their construction is due solely to their always treating St. John's Gospel just as St. Matthew treats it, we have really mastered the only point about which any serious difficulty can arise.

Both Gospels are then seen to be distinctly supplemental to, and both based on the Apostolic Gospels of St. John and St. Matthew. St. Mark shows where St. Matthew has and where he has not arranged his history in a strictly chronological order. He also supplies those circumstantial details which go so far to give an air of reality to any recorded incident.

In doing this, St. Mark always bases his narrative on that of St. Matthew. Taking one portion of St. Matthew's record after another, he, as it were, pegs it down into the soil of his own narrative, and straightway it throws out fresh shoots and fresh flowers, albeit of a very different kind.

That this is a method of narration wholly alien to our

modern ideas may be admitted. But inasmuch as it represents the *de facto* relation between the two Gospels, it clearly cannot be set on one side by any mere subjective prejudices of our own.

That Gospels by disciples of Apostles must, as a matter of fact, gain authority by being constantly and unmistakably grafted on to Gospels by Apostles, is obvious.

It may seem to us that the gain achieved by this grafting is but small.

But this evidently was not the view of the early Church. For Tertullian expressly says of St. Luke's Gospel, that it was accepted by the Church because it was in accordance with what the Apostolic Gospels laid down.

The exact manner in which the grafting process has been carried out will be shown in the evidence of variations.

To pass on for a moment to the construction of St. Luke's Gospel. This, again, sufficiently explains itself.

As to repeated matter, it falls naturally into two distinct divisions.

1. He repeats for the third time incidents introduced primarily by St. Matthew and repeated by St. Mark, thus becoming the third factor in an abnormal threefold portion of the narrative.

2. He repeats for the fourth time incidents introduced primarily by John, and repeated both by St. Matthew and St. Mark, thus becoming the fourth factor in all normal fourfold portions of the history.

In the *first* case he repeats incidents related by both St. Matthew and St. Mark in such a manner as to show that St. Mark's arrangement represented the true order. What other repetitions (and they are few) he allows himself, generally serve to show where his narrative breaks off from or rejoins that of Matthew and Mark.

In the *second* case he is dealing with incidents reintroduced from John both by Matthew and Mark.

It will be seen that St. Luke's Gospel is original to a far greater extent than St. Mark's, consisting as it does of three-fourths of original matter, whereas the original matter in St. Mark is only one-half.

The one-fourth of non-original or repeated matter in St.

Luke, which consists mainly of isolated words and sentences reintroduced in his own narrative, may be thus divided.

1. In the first place, he traverses ground already occupied by St. Matthew but neglected by St. Mark.

2. In the second place, he traverses ground already occupied both by St. Matthew and St. Mark.

The point to be noticed here is that in the first of these two cases his verbal agreement with St. Matthew is extremely close; so close, indeed, as in places almost to amount to verbal identity, and incomparably closer than that of St. Mark. In the second case, however, his verbal agreement with St. Matthew is far less pronounced.

Now we notice also that, whereas St. Mark's agreement with St. Matthew is everywhere of a perfectly uniform character, that of St. Luke is, as we have shown above, of a distinctly dual character, being influenced by the interposition of St. Mark. Thus we are compelled to infer that whereas there was nowhere any disturbing cause between St. Mark and St. Matthew, St. Mark himself was the disturbing cause between St. Luke and St. Matthew; and the natural explanation of that fact can only be found in the supposition that St. Luke wrote with both St. Matthew's and St. Mark's Gospels before him.

An overwhelming amount of corroborative evidence on this point will be found to be supplied by the evidence of repetitions.

As bearing on the general relation of the Gospels to each other, one point deserves especial notice.

In all portions of the record in which essentially historical matter predominates the Synoptic narratives are always longer than that of St. John. In these cases a larger portion of the subject lies outside St. John's avowed purpose in writing.

But this is by no means the case when we approach the crises of the history and the great creed facts of the record. Here St. John's record is not only usually the longest, but often incomparably longer than either of the Synoptic narratives.

Thus to talk of St. John's Gospel being in these cases supplemental to the Synoptic Gospels, is simply a misuse of language, and as complete a misrepresentation of the facts of the case as could well be imagined.

There is, of course, a danger lest, whilst examining the construction of separate samples of the Gospel record, we should lose sight of the symmetry of the construction as a whole.

For instance, it is very easy to lose sight of the wide difference between the manner in which the Evangelists deal with the main history, and the manner in which they deal with its opening, and still more its concluding, portions.

In both cases the principle of construction is the same, *i.e.* there is the same independence between St. John and the Synoptists, coupled with a given amount of repetition between them.

But in the main history the plan of narration, though the same, is on an infinitely larger scale.

Thus, if we take the whole of the main history, we see that St. John alone gives the record of the beginning and the end; whilst the Synoptists all agree in supplying the middle and longer portion of the period. Only at one point—the feeding of the five thousand—do St. John and the Synoptists meet on common ground.

Apart from this one repeated incident, St. Matthew and St. Mark both begin where St. John leaves off, and both leave off where he begins. But for his filling in the lacunæ left in St. John's later narrative precisely the same facts would be equally conspicuous in St. Luke.

Thus in the main history the evidence of designed adjustment between the four writers is in reality quite as conspicuous as in any of the later and shorter narratives.

The Evidence of Repetitions presents us with an array of facts of so remarkable a kind that, even if they stood unsupported by other evidence, they would go very far to prove that nothing but a fixed design in writing could have produced them. Let us first deal with Johannean incidents.

Judging solely by the laws of probability we should naturally expect that the repetitions between any two writers would be more numerous than between any three, and incomparably more numerous than between any four.

But this natural expectation is wholly falsified. What we actually do find is exactly the reverse. Thus, as between St. John and the Synoptists, the combinations which we should expect to be the most rare (*i.e.* the fourfold) are the standing

rule; whilst the combinations which we should expect to be most frequent (viz. those between St. John and any one of the Synoptists separately) are conspicuous only by their absence or comparative rarity (see Chap. IV.). If we were asked to assign the most reasonable and logical cause for this most unexpected effect, we should be compelled to state it thus: Save in very exceptional circumstances, the incidents from St. John, which St. Matthew chose to repeat, must have been repeated of set purpose by both St. Mark and St. Luke.

Let us take another instance. Still dealing with Johannean incidents, we find the following remarkable circumstance:—

In the Table of Incidents there are twenty-three incidents in which St. Luke repeats what has already been narrated by the other three. Omit St. Mark, and not one single incident does St. Luke repeat which has been narrated by the first two.

The same thing happens in the Table of Details; twenty-nine details are repeated by all four. Omit St. Mark, and again we find not one single repetition between the remaining three. Again we ask, Could any possible combination of chances produce this result?

Turn now to details mentioned first by St. Matthew. We should expect here that the repetitions, as between St. Matthew and St. Luke, would be more numerous than between St. Matthew, St. Mark, and St. Luke collectively. But the very reverse of this is the case.

In the Table of Incidents the threefold repetitions number sixty-nine, the twofold are only ten.

In the Table of Details the threefold repetitions are fifty-one, and the twofold only one!!

In other words, save under such exceptional circumstances as we have mentioned elsewhere, St. Luke scarcely ever repeats St. Matthew unless St. Mark also repeats him.

It seems to me that this fact, once ascertained, cannot but speak for itself. Unless either St. Luke wrote with St. Matthew's and St. Mark's Gospels before him, or St. Matthew wrote with St. Mark's and St. Luke's Gospels before him, how can this fact possibly be accounted for? Both writers act in one way when St. Mark covers the same ground, and in another way when he does not do so. Thus he is always a disturbing cause between the two.

In sharp contrast with the facts thus established, we have to consider the twofold repetitions as between St. Matthew and St. Luke only, *i.e.* where St. Mark does not cover the same ground.

A comparatively small number of these repetitions occur in the case of main incidents of the history, as the Sermon on the Mount and the healing of the centurion's servant.

In these cases the verbal identity between St. Luke and St. Matthew is very great, but it is incomparably less than is observable in the more normal occurrence of such repetitions. In these cases St. Luke repeats apparently in its true historical connection some more or less short sayings of our Lord which St. Matthew has incorporated in his longer addresses. In all these cases the verbal agreement is of the closest, not infrequently attaining to sustained identity. That no such verbal identity is ever observable in any repetitions when St. Mark covers the same ground, our tables will sufficiently prove.

With regard to repetitions as between St. Mark and St. Luke only, we need only say that they are comparatively rare, and are practically confined to those cases in which St. Mark, having expanded some portion of St. Matthew's narrative, St. Luke in turn expands St. Mark's expansion.

With regard to the fourfold repetition alluded to above, a more detailed account of the arguments based upon and the deductions drawn from them will be found in Chap. IV.

The Evidence of Variations. If we eliminate all the original and independent portions of the parallel narratives, we have remaining a certain number of closely similar, but still varied, statements.

Now there are two ways in which these may be treated. One, and it is that which has been followed by most critics, is to pick out of these passages words or sentences which are identical, and try to base upon their likeness some argument for a common origin. The other is to classify the points in which they vary from one another, and from that classification to deduce the principles which guided the writers, not in copying from one another (which they do not do), but in repeating, from their own point of view, incidents already narrated. By using the first method, we gather together a few fragments, it may be two, it may be twenty, identical

words, which are merely the unaltered remnants of the preceding narrative, serving to show us merely what the writer did not feel called upon to alter, but by no means indicating what was his object in repeating the incident at all. By adopting the second course we fix our attention on the points in which each successive narrator varies from his predecessor, and so, provided the variations are sufficient in number, can hardly fail to gather what the distinctive line of thought of each writer was.

The first course is that which would naturally be adopted by an investigator already convinced that the Evangelists had never seen each other's writings.

The second would be the equally natural course for any one uninfluenced by such a preconception to adopt.

In my former work I have printed in parallel columns 947 groups of varied statements, a collection as nearly as possible exhaustive. This list is, I think, amply sufficient to establish three facts—

1. That these variations represent, though on the smallest possible scale, the principle of reproduction accompanied by a balancing amount of omission and addition which everywhere lies at the root of Gospel construction. In other words, the variations stand to these fragments of parallel narratives in precisely the same relation as main incidents stand to the whole history, and details of incidents stand to the whole narratives of such incidents.

2. That the samples of variation nearly always represent the same sentence altered progressively.

3. That though these alterations are often so slight that their object is by no means superficially apparent, yet as a general rule they indicate not only the reason of the alteration, but some perfectly recognisable development in the successive narratives.

Thus any one looking through the list could at once jot down numerous instances of development of (1) agency, (2) action, (3) person, (4) place, (5) manner (6) method, (7) cause, (8) time, (9) object (10) fact, (11) material, (12) intention, (13) command, (14) feeling, (15) number, (16) circumstance, (17) mental attitude, (18) thought, (19) principle, (20) description, (21) occasion, (22) value,

(23) purpose, (24) quotation, (25) designation, (26) quality, (27) motive, (28) character, (29) intensity, and so forth.

Two or three examples of these variations will suffice to show the way in which they lend themselves to careful study.

Thus, in the account of the healing of Peter's wife's mother, St. Matthew writes, "He saw" her; St. Mark, "they tell Him of her"; St. Luke, "they prayed Him for her."

This is only a single instance of the constantly recurring manner in which St. Matthew concentrates our attention upon our Lord Himself; whilst St. Mark and St. Luke concentrate our attention, in more or less different ways, upon the subordinate actors in the scene.

We may, I think, take for granted that no one who had not previously satisfied himself as to the intentional character and extreme minuteness of the variations would dream of even bestowing a second thought upon the different way in which each writer brings this subject before us. Yet each variation is a homily in itself.

Again, when in the explanation of the Parable of the Sower, our Lord insists on three conditions with regard to a hearer's reception of the word, St. Matthew only records that he must "understand it"; St. Mark, that he must "accept it"; St. Luke, that he must "hold it fast."

Three separate treatises on these conditions could hardly bring out their significance more clearly than this allocation of them to the several Evangelists.

Another important characteristic of the several narratives is the manner in which the principle, that what a man does through another he does himself, is illustrated. Thus St. John says that Herod scourged Jesus; the Synoptists say that the soldiers scourged Him. Again, St. John says that Jesus distributed the food to the multitudes; the Synoptists, that the disciples distributed it. Again, when St. Matthew tells us "God said," St. Mark and St. Luke tell us "Moses said."

It is only when we note these more obvious and constantly recurring peculiarities that we are able to see that the same principle applies in many cases in which its application might not at first sight be even suspected. As, for instance, when

St. Matthew attributes to the centurion at Capernaum words and conduct which St. Luke attributes to his agents. Or when St. Matthew attributes words to Jairus which St. Mark and St. Luke, in their fuller history, show were really spoken by a messenger.

THE EVIDENCE OF ADDITIONS AND OMISSIONS goes at once to the root of the whole plan of Gospel construction.

Each Gospel is now in one way, now in another, a curtailment of its predecessor in one direction and an expansion of it in another. By no other means, so far as we can see, could the relation which exists between the Gospels, especially as to mere bulk, have been so consistently maintained.

As between St. John and St. Matthew, the latter always omits the more intrinsically important facts, and adds those of lesser importance. This is a fact which simply cannot be gainsaid. It is true that it is obscured in the main history by the extent to which St. Matthew's plan of narration requires him to deal at certain crises of the history with precisely the same episodes as St. John. But in these cases it is again St. John who always gives the greater number of the most intrinsically important details; St. Matthew who not only omits them, but always adds far less intrinsically important details on his own account. The extent to which St. Mark's narrative, when compared with that of St. Matthew, omits the more rather than the less important incidents, is a fact which needs no proof. Nor does he at all depart from this custom even when he is most closely covering the same ground as St. Matthew. Witness, for instance, his omission of St. Peter's failure of faith when essaying to walk on the water, or of the promise to St. Peter made immediately before the Transfiguration.

It cannot indeed be said that the incidents related by St. Luke are of less intrinsic importance than those related by St. Matthew. But in this case the incidents belong for the most part to an altogether different phase of teaching. Their special appropriateness to a distinctly missionary or preaching Gospel are patent even to the most ordinary observer.

On the other hand, no one can say for a moment that the details which St. Luke adds at the crises of the history are

by any means so intrinsically important as those which he omits.

Perhaps for a single example of these statements we could not find more apt illustrations than are afforded by the several narratives of our Lord's arrest.

Here, as usual, everything most essentially personal to our Lord Himself is related only by St. John—as, for instance, the fact that on His admitting His identity the whole of the arresting band "went backward, and fell to the ground."

This incident might well have claimed a first place in any history.

Again, what is there in the narratives of St. Mark and St. Luke to equal in interest and importance the saying recorded only by St. Matthew, "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and He shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels"? As usual, St. Mark and St. Luke merely add details about the actors in the scene other than our Lord Himself.

THE EVIDENCE OF CHRONOLOGICAL ARRANGEMENT has to be examined with reference (*a*) to the main history, and (*b*) to the various component parts of the history.

The actual facts in the main history with which, so far as the Synoptic Gospels are concerned, the Harmonist has to deal, have been stated by Professor Birks in his *Horæ Evangelicæ* in a manner which leaves absolutely nothing to be desired.

Taking numbers affixed to St. Mark's incidents as a basis of comparison, he gets the following results.

In the part of the history extending to the end of the third section of our diagram St. Mark and St. Luke are in almost exact agreement, whilst St. Matthew's arrangement is materially different. *In the rest of the history all the three records are to all intents and purposes in absolute agreement.* At the same time, Professor Birks only obtains this agreement by treating the whole of one long portion of St. Luke (ix. 51–xviii. 14) as though it were all original, or found only in St. Luke, and therefore rightly to be excluded from the comparison. But this is not the case. On the contrary, it contains certain facts and parables which St. Matthew and St. Mark relate in an altogether different part of the history.

Thus, though Professor Birks' harmony possesses the very rare merit of presenting all the facts exactly as they stand, the unexplained exclusion of the whole of this portion of St. Luke's text is undoubtedly the one serious blot upon it.

It is especially unfortunate in that it avoids just the most crucial of the Harmonist's difficulties.

Let us see then—

1. What Professor Birks' harmony really establishes; and
2. How we can best treat this excluded portion.

Up to the end of our third section Professor Birks' figures stand thus—

St. Mark's figures run in numerical order from 1 to 29.

St. Matthew's figures run 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 11, 12, 8, 9, 24, 25, 13, 14, 15, 26, 28, 16, 17, 18, 21, 22, 23, 27, 29.

St. Luke's figures run 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 19, 23, 22, 24, 25, 26, 28, 29.

Thus, if we assume that the call of the four disciples and the miraculous draught of fishes are different events, there is so far only one exception, the visit of Jesus' mother (22), to an absolutely perfect agreement between St. Mark and St. Luke.

Against the obvious presumption that St. Mark and St. Luke give the historical order of the incidents, whilst St. Matthew groups them after a literary fashion, there is really nothing to be said.

As Professor Birks points out, this presumption is greatly strengthened by the fact that during the rest, and by far the larger portion, of the history, the agreement between all three writers is, to all intents and purposes, absolutely perfect.

We have only, then, to inquire—

Can we throw any light upon the construction of the one long portion of St. Luke which Professor Birks virtually excludes from his harmony?

I think we can.

The only events which it contains which are clearly identical with events related by St. Matthew and St. Mark *constitute the beginning and the end of the central portion* (xi. 14–xiii. 21) *of the excluded history.*

These events, and therefore presumably all that lies between them, belong to the epoch of Parabolic Teaching at Capernaum. Thus Luke xi. 14–xiii. 21 belongs historically

to the early part of the eighth chapter of St. Luke's Gospel, and would come in naturally between viii. 21 and viii. 22.

We have only got to recognise this fact to see that though there is one very material exception to the harmony shown by Professor Birks, it is at least an exception, the nature of which can be very clearly defined.

St. Luke's narrative of this period stands thus—

| A | B | C | D |
|---|---|---|---|
| Beginning of Parabolic Teaching. | Events till long after the beginning of St. Luke's longer *via Crucis* as indicated by ix. 50. | Middle and end of Parabolic Teaching. | End of longer *via Crucis.* |
| viii. 4–21. | viii. 22–xi. 13. | xi. 14–xiii. 21. | xiii. 22, etc. |

Thus B and C are historically inverted. If we replace them in what seems to be their true historical order, we at once make a continuous narrative both of the Parabolic Teaching and also of the *via Crucis.*

It is beyond the scope of the present work to trace out all the harmonising effect of this transposition. One most striking fact we will mention.

In St. Matthew and St. Mark (1) the visit of Jesus' mother and brethren, and (2) the Pharisees' accusation, happen on the same day and hour.

In the present order of St. Luke they are separated by the whole of section B, representing several months. Place C next to A, and once more the same events happen on the same day and hour.

The new connection at the end of C and the beginning of B is no less remarkable.

The result may best be seen by placing St. Mark's and St. Luke's narratives in parallel columns.

| St. Mark's Narrative | St. Luke's Revised Narrative |
|---|---|
| After relating the Parable of the Mustard Seed he continues, "And the same day, when the even was come, He saith unto them, Let us pass over unto the other side." | After relating the Parable of the Mustard Seed (xiii. 19), and adding the Parable of the Leaven (xiii. 21), he continues (viii. 22), "Now it came to pass on a certain day that He went into a ship." |

Thus, again, events of the same day and hour, which are widely separated in St. Luke's present narrative, are in its revised form brought together.

It is most important here to notice that the effect of the revision extends even to the very wording.

From St. Luke we know that the Parable of the Mustard Seed was spoken on the Sabbath. This at once enables us to see the force of St. Mark's words when he tells us that they waited for the evening, that is to say, till the Jewish Sabbath was over, before they began their voyage.

Again, St. Luke's note of time, which has had to be translated in a vague and general way ("on a certain day," or "on one of those days"), now becomes a definite and most clearly connecting link ("on the first day of the week") with the previously mentioned Sabbath, and forms an explanatory equivalent to St. Mark's "when the even was come."

The reader must bear in mind that, whereas we should be led by St. Matthew and St. Mark to suppose that all the parables were spoken on one day, St. Luke shows us that they really occupied two days, the second of which was the Sabbath. Nay more, a careful comparison of St. Luke's narrative with that of St. Matthew and St. Mark will enable us to identify the actual time and occasion on which each separate parable was spoken. To suppose that this could be the case if St. Luke's narrative was not intended to be in this place what it is everywhere else, explanatory and supplemental, seems to me wholly unreasonable.

But we have by no means completed our case when we have shown that this part of St. Luke's text is imperatively demanded at an earlier part of his history.

In its present position this narrative wholly destroys the otherwise singularly harmonious relation (as shown in Section VI. of diagram) between St. Luke and St. John.

From what has been said it will be seen that, so far as the incidents of the main history are concerned, all questions of "harmony" are really confined to what stands in our diagram as the third section.

With regard to the evidence of chronological arrangement as it affects the various divisions of the history, I would only ask the reader to observe two facts.

1. It is by placing St. John first, as we do in our diagram, that we obtain a narrative in which the events follow one another in a natural historical order. This is generally perfectly plain, as in the third section, or when St. John records the first examination before Annas, St. Matthew and Mark the second examination before Caiaphas, and St. Luke the third before the Council. But even where it is less plain a very little reflection will generally lead to the same conclusion. For instance, in the account of the trial before Pilate, St. John alone gives the successive stages of the trial itself. Almost without exception the Synoptists give us the results, whether direct or indirect, of the trial.

2. Again, we shall often have to observe how the symmetry of the history is either made or marred by the order in which its parts are read.

Take, for instance, the account of St. Peter's denials (see p. 71).

Or take again the early part of the history of the resurrection.

Here St. John fixes our attention upon a single woman, St. Matthew upon two women, St. Mark upon three, St. Luke upon a company.

Place St. John last, and instead of the order being one, two, three, a company, it is two, three, a company, one.

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I have now tried to indicate the general character of the evidences which, with certain obvious and necessary reservations in particular cases, will be found to apply to every one of our samples of Gospel construction.

The reader will, of course, observe that the strength of the evidence is indefinitely increased by the intensely unusual character of the construction shown. It is in every case a sort of hall-mark, the significance of which cannot possibly be called in question.

## CHAPTER III

### THE SAME ANALYSIS YIELDS RESULTS CLOSELY CORRESPONDING IN FIFTEEN PARTICULARS IN EVERY ONE OF FORTY SAMPLES OF THE JOINT AUTHORSHIP OF FOUR WRITERS

We have now to show that even an exhaustive analysis of construction, in spite of the vast number of details which it embraces, really produces closely corresponding results in every one of our forty samples, *i.e.* in every part of the Gospel history.

Our analysis will embrace, so to speak, four ingredients, and eleven combinations of these ingredients.

In other words, it will deal (*a*) with the portion of the narrative peculiar to each of the four writers, and (*b*) with the portions of the narrative common to two, three, or four writers, *i.e.* with the repetitions caused by the eleven possible combinations of these writers.

#### ITEMS OF ANALYSIS

1. A portion of St. John's Gospel.

This portion invariably constitutes the *de facto* basis of the sample history. It is sometimes supplemented and sometimes amplified by the other writers, but it always stands as an absolutely indispensable portion of the sample as a whole. Always representing the most important aspect of the subject with which the sample deals, it tells of matters exclusively personal to our Lord Himself, and especially of His doctrinal and more distinctly spiritual teaching.

But it does this in two ways. Sometimes it deals ex-

haustively with the portion of the subject which it treats; sometimes it leaves much to be supplied. In the one case, it constitutes an entirely independent Johannean portion; in the other case, it forms a framework into which the less important details of the Synoptic writers are always found to fit in such a way as to make an altogether fuller and more circumstantial history.

Occasionally the division between the Johannean and the Synoptic portion is one exclusively of time. In these cases, as in our third section, St. John deals with an earlier, while the Synoptists all agree in dealing with a later period.

2. A portion of St. Matthew's narrative.

St. Matthew's contribution to the sample always balances, and is always supplemental to that of St. John. Now and again where St. John has summarised St. Matthew expands, and where St. John has dealt with a subject at length St. Matthew summarises. But, as a rule, St. Matthew supplies a record of an entirely fresh type. If it is personal to our Lord, it is also personal in a direct manner to those brought immediately under His influence. But, far more generally, St. Matthew gives historical and circumstantial details, and that with special reference to newly-introduced actors in the scene. As the representative of the Synoptists, he it is who decides whether St. John has or has not dealt with any given subject exhaustively; *i.e.* if he does not think that St. John's record needs amplifying, neither do St. Mark nor St. Luke. In this respect they simply follow in his footsteps.

Nor do St. Mark and St. Luke follow St. Matthew's example only in the matter of omissions from St. John's history. No matter how peculiar the manner may be in which St. Matthew either expands or summarises a statement of St. John, the other two Synoptists almost invariably summarise or expand it in the same language. (See specially the sixteen shorter samples.)

The percentage of matter found in St. Matthew, but not found in St. John, naturally varies according to the extent to which the narratives cover the same ground.

Thus, in the sections where the area embraces a considerable period it amounts to some ninety-seven per cent.; in the

longer fourfold narratives it falls to ninety, and in the shorter fourfold narratives to eighty-two per cent.

Thus, though taken in their entirety, St. John's and St. Matthew's Gospels are practically original; yet in certain parts there is a concentration of identity which is of itself sufficient to constitute them closely-allied documents.

3. The portion of St. Mark's Gospel.

St. Mark's contribution to the sample always represents a version of St. Matthew's narrative, but is abbreviated in matters which are either personal to our Lord or otherwise of great intrinsic importance, and expanded in matters which are either personal to subordinate actors or altogether of more circumstantial character and of less intrinsic importance.

As a rule, the abbreviation in one direction is as nearly as possible balanced by the expansion in the other. Thus the amount of matter which is original as compared with St. Matthew's Gospel always closely approximates to fifty per cent., or one half. But this is by no means tantamount to saying that the non-original half is a mere reproduction of St. Matthew. On the contrary, the very shortest statements of St. Matthew are constantly varied and presented in a new light. Thus, though, if we may so speak, one half of the bricks which St. Mark uses are taken from St. Matthew's edifice, they are always used for the purpose of building up something new. It is remarkable that the more any subject has to do with subordinate actors, the more freely does St. Mark expand St. Matthew's narrative. Thus, in the case of the healing of the daughter of the Syrophœnician woman and of the death of the Baptist, the percentages of fresh matter in St. Mark are seventy and sixty-five respectively. But in the sixteen shorter samples, which have all to do with our Lord personally, the percentage falls to thirty-seven.

4. The portion of St. Luke's Gospel.

St. Luke's contribution to the fourfold sample usually contains an amount of fresh or original matter, which will be sufficiently indicated by the following figures:—In the thirteen sections it is eighty, in the third section sixty, in the fourfold narratives seventy-four, and in the sixteen shorter samples fifty-three, per cent.

But, again, even more than in the case of St. Mark the non-

original part of St. Luke's narrative is not by any means mere repetition of one or other of the preceding narratives. With regard to St. John's narrative, St. Luke simply follows the example of St. Matthew and St. Mark. But with regard to the narratives of St. Matthew and St. Mark, he freely combines them. But even so he never makes use of St. Matthew's narrative unless St. Mark also makes use of it. Thus his additions to the sample are always either wholly original or else expansions of St. Mark's expansions of St. Matthew.

In the longer samples, and notably in our third section, St. Luke does continually repeat St. Matthew in cases where St. Mark does not cover the same ground. But here the verbal identity between St. Luke and St. Matthew becomes of the most marked kind. Indeed, if it were not for two or three longer repetitions, as notably the Sermon on the Mount, the similarity would amount almost to sustained verbal identity.

In speaking of St. Luke's contribution to the several samples, we must be understood to exclude this entirely abnormal relation between St. Matthew and St. Luke. It is an exception which is practically confined to our third section, or longest and most abnormal sample.

But here I must say a word about the four contributions taken collectively, and the relation, as regards mere bulk or length, in which they will be found in every sample to stand to each other.

Clearly the actual amount of historical material which each writer contributes to our several samples must necessarily vary considerably.

Just in proportion as any given sample involves the record of events and teaching which represent the point of view of any given Evangelist, in such proportion the contribution of that Evangelist will naturally be the longest.

Thus all the longer samples, *i.e.* the sections, contain a large amount of historical matter which lies altogether outside the scope of St. John's narrative. Hence out of fourteen sections, St. John's is the longest contribution only in five instances, *i.e.* the Last Supper, the interval from the Last Supper to the arrest, the trial before Pilate, the Burial, and the Resurrection.

But in the ten fourfold narratives, where the history is

exceptionally personal to our Lord, St. John's narrative is the longest in seven instances, whilst in the most important crisis of all, the Resurrection, it is three times as long as that of St. Matthew, four times as long as that of St. Mark, and about one-fourth longer than that of St. Luke.

Again, in the sixteen shorter statements it is the longest in seven instances. It will be found that, as a rule, the only considerable difference between the length of St. John's and of the other contributions arises either from St. John giving a summary and the Synoptists all expanding the history, or from St. John giving an unusually full history and the Synoptists all giving a summary.

The extent to which, when St. John gives a full statement, the Synoptists summarise that statement in identical language, is a fact which, in spite of its frequent occurrence and evidential value, modern criticism has entirely overlooked.

In the case of the sixth section—the period prior to the last entry into Jerusalem—it will be remembered that whilst St. John gives a full history of the leading events of the period, and St. Matthew and St. Mark summarise the period, St. Luke fills in the lacunæ which St. John's narrative creates. In this respect the sixth section constitutes a wholly exceptional instance of construction.

St. Matthew's contribution to our samples is uniformly longer than that of St. John, where purely historical matter predominates, and uniformly shorter where all four Evangelists deal with any matter peculiarly personal to our Lord.

But for this difference the contribution of St. Matthew to our samples stands, as a general rule, in a closely uniform relation to those of the other Evangelists.

In only two of the longer sections is it very considerably the longest. (1) In the history of the Galilæan ministry, where it is nearly twice as long as that of St. Mark. Here, however, St. Luke's narrative is closely approximate to it in length; and (2) in the seventh section,—the events of Holy Week,—where it is double the length of that either of St. Mark or St. Luke.

The instances in which St. Matthew's contribution is very conspicuously shorter than that of St. John are invariably supplied by the most intrinsically important narratives, viz.

the account of the Last Supper, of the events immediately succeeding it, of the trial before Pilate, of the Burial, and of the Resurrection. In these cases St. John's record is from six times to three times as long as St. Matthew's.

St. Mark's contribution is the longest in only one of our longer samples—the fourth. Here it is considerably longer than that of St. Matthew,—though closely covering the same ground,—and nine times as long as that of St. Luke.

This section deals with our Lord's final circuit in the heathen districts of Tyre and Sidon and the coasts of Decapolis.

It is remarkable that this circuit is introduced by the Parable of Defilement, or of clean and unclean meats,—a parable which was practically repeated in the vision granted to St. Peter under closely analogous circumstances, viz. just before his first preaching to the Gentiles.

It seems difficult to avoid connecting the exceptional position occupied by St. Mark's record in this section with the alleged Petrine origin of his Gospel.

Nor can we forget that so far as the subject of the section is concerned, it is the very section in which we should have expected St. Luke's Gospel to be the longest. Yet save for the account of the Transfiguration and one or two incidents immediately preceding and following it, St. Luke passes over this period in silence.

St. Luke's contributions to our samples are conspicuously long in three instances only—(1) in the introductory section, (2) in the account of our Lord's teaching during the journeys involved in the visits to Jerusalem or Bethany as related by St. John, and (3) in the twelfth of the shorter samples—the final examination before the Council prior to our Lord's being delivered up to Pilate.

For their brevity St. Luke's contributions to our samples are conspicuous only in the following cases:—

1. In the case already mentioned of the final circuit prior to the Transfiguration.

2. In the account of the last recorded visit to Capernaum.

Here St. Matthew's record is eight times, and St. Mark's three times as long as St. Luke's. At the same time, it is observable that St. Luke covers the same ground, but merely gives a sufficient record to identify his own narrative with

those of St. Matthew and St. Mark. Thus out of a hundred words only seventeen are fresh in St. Luke.

In all other samples the relation in which St. Luke's narrative stands to that of the other three Evangelists is of a closely uniform character.

5. Repetitions as between all four Evangelists. (See next chapter.)

6. Repetitions between St. John and St. Matthew only.

These are for the most part conspicuous only by their absence; but even so, they are far more numerous than between either St. John and St. Mark only, or St. John and St. Luke only.

7. Repetitions as between St. John and St. Mark only.

These, again, are far rarer than between either St. John and St. Matthew, or between St. John and St. Luke.

8. Repetitions as between St. John and St. Luke.

These, again, are of wholly exceptional occurrence. On the other hand, when they do occur, as notably in the account of Peter's denials, of the trial before Pilate, and of the appearance to the assembled apostles, they are always conspicuous instances of the supplemental and explanatory relation which St. Luke's Gospel always bears to that of St. John.

9. Repetitions as between St. John, St. Matthew, and St. Mark.

Contrary to all laws of probability, these are far more numerous than the repetitions as between St. John and any other Evangelist taken separately. Again, and equally in opposition to the laws of probability, they are far less frequent than the repetitions between St. John and the other three Evangelists.

10. Repetitions as between St. John, St. Matthew, and St. Luke only.

These are everywhere so rare as to be practically non-existent.

11. Repetitions as between St. John, St. Mark, and St. Luke only.

These, again, are very rare, but by no means so much so as the last named.

12. Repetitions as between St. Matthew, St. Mark, and St. Luke.

Here, contrary to all the laws of probability, the repetitions are some seven times more numerous than between St. Matthew and St. Luke only. Apart from design, we should, of course, expect them to be far less numerous.

13. Repetitions as between St. Matthew and St. Mark.

These are uniformly the most numerous of any other repetitions; but even so, do not greatly exceed those between St. Matthew, St. Mark, and St. Luke.

14. The repetitions as between St. Matthew and St. Luke only.

These, contrary to all the laws of probability, are far less numerous than the repetitions between the same writers, when St. Mark is also included.

15. The repetitions as between St. Mark and St. Luke only.

Here, again, all expectations based on the laws of probability are wholly falsified; the repetitions under this head being far less numerous than when St. Matthew is included.

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No argument will be required to prove that, apart from a consistently followed design, there could be no possible reason for supposing that there would be any kind of sustained similarity in all these particulars, even in two of our samples. How much greater, then, the improbability of the similarity extending to them all?

## CHAPTER IV

### THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SYNOPTISTS OMIT OR REPEAT JOHANNEAN SUBJECTS DOMINATES THE CONSTRUCTION OF EVERY ONE OF FORTY SAMPLES OF GOSPEL CONSTRUCTION

THE plan of Gospel construction is everywhere dominated by the extent to which all the Synoptic Evangelists concur, both in leaving out and in repeating the same portions of the Gospel of St. John.

This being so, nothing can be more important for the student than to have an accurate knowledge of the actual facts by which this dominating influence is represented.

The figures which concern the main incidents of the history stand thus—

| | |
|---|---|
| Incidents recorded by St. John | 128 |
| „ omitted by all three Synoptists | 94 |
| Johannean incidents repeated separately or collectively by the Synoptists | |
| Incidents common to St. John and St. Matthew only | 1 |
| „ „ „ „ St. Mark only | 1 |
| „ „ „ „ St. Luke only | 4 |
| „ „ „ St. Matthew, and St. Mark only | 4 |
| „ „ „ „ „ St. Luke only | 0 |
| „ „ „ St. Mark, and St. Luke only | 1 |
| Common to all four Evangelists | 23 |

With perhaps two exceptions, the Transfiguration and the Ascension, the 128 incidents related by St. John represent just those incidents which any independent historian would be most likely to chronicle.

Under these circumstances we should naturally expect that of such incidents there would be very few indeed which would not be recorded by one or other of three independent historians.

Yet 94 out of these 128 incidents are passed over in total silence, not by one or by two, but by all three of the Synoptic writers.

No matter when St. John wrote, how can this be explained except by design and concerted action?

But this is not all.

Apart from design, it would be natural that a larger number of the same incidents should be common to St. John and any one of the Synoptists than to St. John and any two, and incomparably larger than to St. John and all three Synoptists. Yet the very reverse of this is the case.

So much so, indeed, that the fourfold combinations are more than five times greater than any one of the six twofold or threefold combinations.

Such is the state of things in the sections constituting the main history.

We have next to observe a closely similar state of things in the smaller areas of observation represented by the separate fourfold narratives. Here the figures are—

| | |
|---|---|
| Details recorded by St. John | 616 |
| Details omitted by all three Synoptists | 528 |

Johannean details repeated separately and collectively by the Synoptists—

| | |
|---|---|
| Details common to St. John and St. Matthew only | 12 |
| „ „ „ St. Mark only | 4 |
| „ „ „ St. Luke only | 20 |
| „ „ „ St. Matthew, and St. Mark only | 16 |
| „ „ „ St. Matthew, and St. Luke only | 0 |
| „ „ „ St. Mark, and St. Luke | 7 |
| Common to all four Evangelists | 29 |

It is clear that the same arguments which we have applied to the main incidents apply also to the details of incidents, and in some respects with even greater force.

The mere fact that each Evangelist adopts the same principle of narration in each smaller as he does in each larger area, makes it the more impossible to attribute what they do to anything like chance.

Again, explanations, which might at first appear to account for the peculiar treatment of a limited number of main

incidents, become wholly untenable when applied to the treatment of the details of incidents. Each narrator is manifestly dealing with a subject about which he has the fullest information.

Again, in every separate instance each writer contributes a considerable number of non-Johannean details, all of which are confessedly of less importance, and far less essential to the completeness of the record, than the Johannean facts which he omits.

Looking, then, at both the above classes of phenomena, let us ask, To what cause can we attribute them? The popular, but, as I maintain, the essentially superficial explanation is, that St. John designedly supplemented the Synoptists, supplying just those incidents and details which they omitted.

It is quite true that this explanation would account for what St. John does. But this is only half the problem. It offers no sort of solution of what the Synoptists do. It does not explain either why at every point they all omit so large a proportion of the most important facts, or why they all agree in making the *same* omissions.

Thus the explanation which may seem possible with regard to St. John is practically impossible with regard to the Synoptists. If it stands with respect to one half of the problem, it breaks down with regard to the other half.

But if it is difficult to reconcile the omissions of the Synoptists with the supposed fact of their not having seen John's Gospel, how much more impossible must it be to account for their systematic repetition of Johannean subjects.

If our evidence affected main incidents only, it would be easy to suggest that these were so manifestly of an exceptionally important character that no historian could dream of omitting them.

But in the face of the list of incidents which the Synoptists do omit, this would, after all, be an exceedingly halting and improbable explanation.

But it simply cannot apply to their uniform repetition of the same details. It would be wholly untrue to say that those which they all select are marked by any pre-eminence of importance over those which they all omit. They simply

represent just those facts about which the Synoptists had information to give which is not found in St. John.

In the matter of details, we must remember that the systematic repetition of Johannean details is wholly without parallel in the case of what may be termed Synoptic details. Twofold repetition with regard to these there is, but threefold repetition is the rarest possible exception. With regard to Johannean subjects, it is the rule.

So far as the Synoptists are concerned, if other evidence would permit, it might be urged that they either wrote from some common source, traditionary or documental, or else that two of them copied from the third.

But this would not account for just these details which are the subject of threefold Synoptic repetition being found in St. John, and save in exceptional cases no other Synoptic details.

However this exceptional threefold repetition by the Synoptists was caused, could any one seriously allege that St. John went through the Synoptic narratives and picked out just those which they had already related three times, and almost invariably preferred those to details which had only been recorded once or twice?

Surely a more manifest *reductio ad absurdum* can hardly be imagined! Yet if St. John wrote last, how could these thrice repeated details, to say nothing of the incidents, attain to such wholly exceptional distinction at his hands?

On the other hand, how absolutely simple is the solution of both classes of phenomena if we accept the fact to which it may be shown that every other branch of evidence points, viz. that the Synoptists all wrote with St. John's Gospel before them.

In this case we have only got to accept proved and perfectly simple and intelligible facts.

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Though the figures supplied by the sixteen shorter samples are not included above, Table III. in Appendix will show that they are of a closely analogous character.

# CHAPTER V

## FOURTEEN SECTIONAL HISTORIES

### FIRST SECTIONAL HISTORY

*The Incarnation, Birth, and Early Life of Jesus*

THE opening words of St. John's Preface remind us of the opening words of the Old Testament, and are manifestly calculated to stand as a Preface not to a single Gospel only, but to the whole of the New Testament.

St. John begins by setting before us the essential Divinity of Him who is to be the subject alike of the Gospel narratives and of the whole of the New Testament teaching. He was "in the beginning"; He was God; He was the Creator; He was the Light of the world; and being such, He was made flesh and dwelt among us.

It seems impossible to help seeing that, short as St. John's record is, it would suffer greatly in effect were it mixed up with the details given by the other two writers.

The considerations already suggested would of themselves suffice to suggest the appropriateness of St. John's Gospel being placed first. But we cannot overlook the fact that St. John alone tells us the real character of Him of whom the Gospels treat.

That three writers in succession all published biographies of a particular person without ever stating that He was in reality very God of very God, and Himself the Creator of the world, is a fact only explainable on the assumption that the information had already been given, and that in some document, acquaintance with which was presupposed.

Nor is it here only, but everywhere, that the Synoptists clearly presuppose a knowledge on the part of their readers of facts which they could only have known through St. John's Gospel. They do so everywhere.

St. Matthew, dealing with the human side of our Lord's character, traces His descent from David and Abraham. He dwells upon the supernatural means by which the Incarnation was brought about, and only incidentally alluding to the birth, proceeds to notice how the several successive events of His infancy were all according to prophecy.

St. Luke gives precise notes of time; connects the birth of Christ with that of His great Forerunner; notes the time and circumstances accompanying and following the birth, thus expanding what is a mere summary in St. Matthew; and covers the period otherwise left blank between the return to Nazareth and the commencement of the Ministry.

The reader will not fail to call to mind the many passages in this part of St. Luke's history which serve to prepare us for the essentially missionary character of his Gospel, alike as to its message and to the persons to whom it was to be addressed.

The distinct character of each record—the Divine in St. John, the Divinely-human in St. Matthew, the historical in St. Luke—could not possibly stand out in more perfect contrast than it does.

But this evidence of subject does not by any means stand alone.

We shall show elsewhere that not only is St. Luke's Preface a natural and appropriate introduction to a last Gospel, but that its wording does in itself prove that his Gospel was the last.

Again, the construction of this part of St. Luke's narrative shows that even at this early stage he was beginning to carry out the explanatory purpose indicated in his Preface.

The fact of there being no actual repetition whatever between his narrative and that of St. Matthew, would of itself raise the strongest presumption that he was writing a supplementary narrative.

But this presumption is raised almost to a certainty when we observe how his narrative fits in with, and explains, that of St. Matthew.

Take two instances.

A careless reader of St. Matthew's Gospel might assume that he represented Joseph and Mary as travelling to Bethlehem on the very eve of our Lord's birth—a supposed fact, as to which hostile critics have always had much to say. But St. Luke shows that they went up for a certain taxing, and that this took place at a time coincident with the circumcision of the Baptist, *i.e.* some six months before our Lord's birth.

Again, in strict accordance with this statement, he says, "And it came to pass, *while they were there, the days were fulfilled* that she should be delivered." Thus there is no scriptural ground for supposing that when St. Luke speaks of the smallness of their lodging, he was making any reference to an "inn."

Again, taking St. Matthew's and St. Luke's narratives together, we are compelled to assume that the residence at Bethlehem extended to about two years and a half, *i.e.* from the time of their first settlement there until the slaughter of the children "from two years old and under."

St. Luke, as he does a hundred times elsewhere, simply interpolates the account of the Purification and passes over the events related by St. Matthew which really intervened between the Purification and the final return to Nazareth.

The hostile critic again quotes from St. Matthew: "And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed to their own country another way."

This, he says, shows that Joseph and Mary intended to return to Bethlehem, and that St. Matthew is therefore at variance with St. Luke, who only recognises a merely temporary sojourn at Bethlehem.

But reading the two Gospels together, *i.e.* assuming the relation between them which everywhere else exists, the whole story confirms what St. Matthew implies, viz. that Joseph had made Bethlehem his adopted home, and but for the angelic warning would have returned there.

## SECOND SECTIONAL HISTORY

### *The Ministry of the Baptist*

This section gives us the first instance of St. John and the Synoptists dealing with the same subject, but at the same time with entirely different aspects of it.

St. John deals exclusively with the Baptist's ministry of witness; the Synoptists deal exclusively with his ministry of baptism and preaching.

That the ministry of witness was alike the most personal to our Lord and the most intrinsically important, is obvious.

St. John alone records the predicted sign by which the Baptist was to recognise Jesus, viz. the descent upon Him of the Holy Spirit. Clearly we should expect the announcement of a prediction to precede its fulfilment. Accordingly, the Synoptists record, not the prediction, but only the fulfilment. At the same time, though the fact of its being a predicted sign was all-important, not one of them mentions it.

This section affords a striking instance of the manner in which the verbal agreement between St. Matthew and St. Luke varies according as St. Mark does or does not cover the same ground.

It will be seen that whereas in the whole narrative the verbal agreement between all three narratives is of the slightest, yet when St. Luke records certain preaching which St. Mark leaves out, he suddenly, and throughout several verses, falls into an exact repetition of St. Matthew's narrative.

The section also furnishes us with a very characteristic fourfold repetition.

The only part of the prediction about the Baptist which St. John relates is related by all three Synoptists.

According to St. John, the Baptist said, "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Isaiah." All three Synoptists repeat this part of the prophecy.

St. Matthew adds the words, "And make His paths straight,"—these words being repeated by St. Mark and St. Luke.

St. Mark alone records the words, "Behold, I send my messenger before Thy face"; whilst St. Luke makes the peculiarly characteristic addition, "Every valley shall be filled, . . . and ALL FLESH SHALL SEE THE SALVATION OF GOD."

The relation between St. Matthew and St. Mark is of the usual kind, whilst the supplemental and expansive character of St. Luke's Gospel is everywhere conspicuous.

THIRD SECTIONAL HISTORY

*From the Ministry of the Baptist to the Feeding of the Five Thousand*

The division of the history as between St. John and the Synoptists is nowhere more conspicuous than in this section.

As usual, St. John relates not only the most intrinsically important events, but those which were also first in point of time. The notice of the earliest intercourse between our Lord and the four specially favoured disciples, the first and second miracles at Cana, and the Jerusalem ministry, all properly precede the Galilæan ministry which the Synoptists relate.

The only possible difficulty with regard to the Johannean half of this section turns upon the question whether the "Feast of the Jews" in John v. was the Feast of Pentecost either immediately preceding or coincident with the imprisonment of the Baptist.

This question again turns upon whether we suppose this chapter to be covered by the notes of time, "For John was not yet cast into prison" (iii. 24), and "When therefore the Lord knew how that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John . . . He left Judæa, and departed again into Galilee" (iv. 1–3).

The time between the Passover and Pentecost would allow ample time for this intervening visit to Galilee. It has often been urged that when our Lord says of the Baptist, "He was a bright and shining light, and *ye were willing for a season* to rejoice in his light" (v. 35), He was regarding him as already in prison.

But it seems to me that this reference to a past state of things exactly fits in with the notices above quoted.

At the same time it seems difficult to imagine that there was not an intentional contrast between St. John's and the Synoptic notes of time, *i.e.* between "Now John was not yet cast into prison" (John iii. 24), and "Now when He heard that John was delivered up" (Matt. iv. 12).

With regard to the Synoptic half of the section, one main point to which our attention cannot but be directed is the

difference in the order in which St. Matthew and his co-historians relate the events of this period.

To understand this we must realise the essential difference between the standpoint of the Apostolic records of St. John and St. Matthew, and the non-Apostolic records, of St. Mark and St. Luke. Centralisation is the keynote of the former, decentralisation of the latter.

St. John's narrative centres round Jerusalem and the Jewish festivals. St. Matthew's centres round Capernaum. St. Mark's and St. Luke's narratives both concentrate our attention upon the actual ministerial labours of our Lord as something distinct from His main teaching.

St. Matthew states that our Lord "dwelt at Capernaum." By this I understand that He made Capernaum His head-quarters and place of residence to a much greater extent than a mere casual reading of the several narratives would seem to indicate. His circuits of teaching could not possibly have been carried on through the periodical rainy season. At the same time, either St. Mark or St. Luke always shows that these circuits started from and ended at Capernaum.

Nor, again, must we suppose that the period during which St. Matthew, at the expense of mere chronological arrangement, groups events into one grand picture, is by any means arbitrarily chosen.

On the contrary, it is exactly coextensive with what can alone be properly termed the Galilæan ministry. It dates from our Lord's leaving Nazareth, and ends with the return to Nazareth, the sending the Apostles on an independent trial mission, and the subsequent Feeding of the Five Thousand.

After this our Lord's following was broken up. It seemed for a moment as if even the chosen Twelve would desert Him. As Herod had just killed the Baptist, so the Jews now sought to kill Jesus. Thus the Galilæan ministry had come to an end.

And with the Galilæan ministry comes to an end also St. Matthew's unique method of narration. For a time he had departed from the more prosaic method of strict chronological arrangement. Having justified this departure by the production of a picture which for grandeur alike of subject and of treatment must ever stand unrivalled in the world of

literature, he returns to the ordinary method of the historian. Thus both the departure from and the return to this method serves to throw into bolder relief the exceeding beauty of his wholly exceptional narrative.

The adaptation of St. Mark's and St. Luke's records to that of St. Matthew is nowhere more conspicuous than at the beginning of this section.

The *pièce de résistance* of St. Matthew's narrative was the Sermon on the Mount.

To carry his readers swiftly over the period which preceded the Sermon on the Mount, he tells of Jesus leaving Nazareth for Capernaum, of His carrying on from there a work of preparatory teaching, of His choosing four of the future Apostles, and with them preaching in many and widely separated districts.

To this period St. Mark and St. Luke give more chapters than, so far, St. Matthew gives verses. St. Matthew's record is confessedly the briefest of summaries. St. Mark shows that the confidential intercourse with the four dated from the very day on which Jesus had first taken up His abode at Capernaum. Nay, that their first call actually took place before His settling there, and that on that occasion they had followed Him into Capernaum. He then tells of certain miracles which marked our Lord's early residence there, speaks of an invitation to St. Peter and others to join Him in visiting neighbouring towns, and *without mentioning any intermediate return to Capernaum*, goes on to describe the circuit, the close of which was rendered memorable by the healing of the leper and its immediate results.

So far the comparison of St. Matthew's and St. Mark's narratives would present one obvious difficulty. According to the former, the first preparatory teaching took place before the first calling of the four, to whom, up to this point, St. Matthew does not allude. Yet, according to St. Mark, they had not only been called, but St. Peter at least had accompanied Him in this preparatory teaching.

St. Luke's is everywhere a Gospel of missing links. It is so in this case. He explains St. Matthew's expression, "and leaving Nazareth" by an account of our Lord's rejection at that place immediately prior to His first settlement at

Capernaum, and presumably in the autumn of the first year of the ministry.

He accepts St. Mark's statement as to the first call of the four, and leaves us to assume that it took place on the occasion of the journey between Nazareth and Capernaum. He then confirms St. Mark's narrative as to the miracles which marked the earliest residence at Capernaum, and by the mention of the same preliminary circumstances confirms St. Mark's account of St. Peter having accompanied our Lord in His first preparatory teaching.

But here again he supplies missing links. He shows that the preparatory teaching extended not only to the neighbouring towns, but, according to the most authoritative reading of Luke iv. 44, to Judæa, and, as St. Matthew implies (by placing it before the call of the four), was followed by a return to Capernaum.

This return would presumably have been about the Feast of Pentecost. But at whatever time it took place, it was signalised by the miraculous draught of fishes, and by the now instructed and attached four leaving all and following Jesus, not as on the occasion of the first call *into*, but *away from*, Capernaum.

We can now see the exact extent to which St. Matthew's and St. Mark's narratives, if read apart from St. Luke's, would mislead us. St. Matthew described the first call, not when it really happened, but when it first became operative, *i.e.* at the time of the miraculous draught of fishes. The two events were as much alike as an ordination of deacons is to an ordination of priests, but they were not therefore the same. It is difficult to see how, in so brief a summary, St. Matthew could have conveyed the actual facts of the case more accurately than he does.

Again, with regard to St. Mark, we see that though his narrative was a great expansion of St. Matthew's summary, it was still itself an exceedingly condensed history. So much so that it merges two entirely separate circuits of teaching,—the preparatory circuit, and the later circuit following the draught of fishes when all four disciples were with Him,—and makes no mention of the return to Galilee by which as usual the spring and summer circuits were separated.

This portion of the history is all the more worthy of close study, because the way we understand it will necessarily make the difference of a clear year in the duration of our Lord's ministry.

The next distinct note of time is afforded by the incident of the disciples plucking the ears of corn, which would be ripe about May.

Thus we have two alternatives to choose between. We must either place all the events above noticed, and many that followed them, between the first settlement at Capernaum and the following May, say a period of some eight months; or,

As the alternative, we must suppose the residence at Capernaum, after the main Galilæan circuit, closed by the healing of the leper,[1] was a second winter residence, and that the events which followed carry on the history to another May, *i.e.* a period in all of about twenty months.

The first of these alternatives has always been adopted, but without discussion, and as a simple matter of course.

The facts which seem to me against it are—

1. It greatly weakens the natural meaning of the expression as to Jesus "dwelling" at Capernaum.

2. Unless we entirely ignore the necessity for the winter and rainy season being spent at headquarters, we have to compress the following events into a space of some five months; the preparatory preaching in the neighbouring towns and in Judæa; a fresh sojourn at Capernaum, the evidently long circuit subsequent to the miraculous draught of fishes, another apparently prolonged visit to Capernaum, and a considerable series of events which followed it. The case is confessedly one of probability rather than proof. But it seems to me that the above view does not make sufficient allowance, either for the extremely compressed character of the records of this part of the history, or for the extent to which they are supplemental to each other. Thus it seems to me far more natural to suppose that our Lord's

[1] The reader will observe that St. Matthew does not really say that the leper was healed immediately after the Sermon on the Mount. The verse with which the eighth chapter commences should really conclude the preceding chapter.

first winter residence at Capernaum lasted well on into the early part of the next year.

We read in Robinson's *Palestine* (vol. i. p. 429):—

"During the months of November and December the rains continue to fall heavily. Snow often falls in Jerusalem in January and February to the depth of a foot or more. The traveller at this season is subjected to the utmost discomfort and inconvenience."

Could the Evangelists have supposed that their readers would entirely ignore these standing conditions? If so, why did they not explain the command, "Pray ye that your flight be not in the winter"?

As I read the Gospels, St. Mark and St. Luke together always enable us to fix a winter residence of some months at Capernaum, followed by a short spring and a longer summer circuit of teaching.

I suppose, then, that the events arrange themselves thus—

Our Lord made His circuit of preparatory teaching in the spring. Returning to Capernaum some time in the early summer, He inaugurated the permanent discipleship of the four. With them He made the long circuit in Galilee, which ended with the healing of the leper and the subsequent retirement into the desert.

He then entered on a second winter residence at Capernaum. After this, again, in the early spring, He commenced the circuit which was interrupted by the plot against His life, when He again returned to the Sea of Galilee, where the multitudes flocking to Him were so great that He had to speak from a boat. He then, having ascended a mountain for prayer, chose the twelve Apostles. After this He, for a time, healed on the plain, and again ascending the mountain, preached "the Sermon on the Mount."

The spring circuit of this second year was then closed by a return to Capernaum.

The longer summer circuit of this year is then briefly described by St. Luke, and we once more come to a third winter residence at Capernaum, and the epoch of parabolic teaching by which it was marked.

Either at the beginning or the close of this winter residence Jesus crosses the Sea of Galilee, stills the storm

so characteristic of the season, heals the Gadarene demoniacs, and immediately returning, raises the daughter of Jairus.

The next spring circuit then begins, and extends to Nazareth, from whence our Lord despatches the Apostles on an independent mission.

The reported death of the Baptist bringing the Apostles back to Him suddenly, our Lord retires to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, and spends the Passover season there, signalising it by the Feeding of the Five Thousand.

The next section will give us the further history, and show another and final summer circuit extending from the Passover season to a time immediately subsequent to the Transfiguration, and immediately prior to the Feast of Tabernacles.

In the Parable of the Barren Fig-tree, the words occur, "Behold these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and find none"; and, again, "Lord, let it alone this year also."

It is commonly argued that though the "three years" would seem naturally to apply to our Lord's ministry, they cannot really do so, because a fourth year is not mentioned.

But if the above arrangement of events be adopted, we not only have to account for four years, but this parable, when the historical transposition of the passage of St. Luke which contains it is allowed for, has to be placed as nearly as possible at the end of the third year.

In his *Horæ Evangelicæ*, Professor Birks has given an extremely careful and exhaustive analysis of a large proportion of the threefold narratives which constitute the Synoptic half of this section. In every instance he considers that the proof of the narratives having been written in the order, Matthew, Mark, Luke, is as nearly decisive as such proof ever can be.

The reader is asked to bear in mind that the Synoptic half of this section is in this matter of threefold repetition essentially different from the Synoptic half of any other of our samples.

Yet it is on this half-section that modern criticism has always concentrated its attention, not, indeed, entirely, but almost entirely to the exclusion of all the normally constituted sections. Thus each critic in turn has practically based his theories on one abnormal half-section, and left his

opponents thirteen complete and normal sections out of which to refute him.

The reader is especially asked to observe the fact that continuous, and as nearly as possible invariable, threefold repetition commences at the point at which St. Matthew and St. Mark begin to differ in the historical sequence of events, and abruptly ceases where they cease to differ.

### FOURTH SECTIONAL HISTORY

*From the Feeding of the Five Thousand to our Lord's Final Visit to Capernaum*

The Johannean half of this section, though it attracts our attention far less than the Synoptic half, is really a longer record than is given by either St. Matthew or St. Mark, whilst it is nearly double as long as that given by St. Luke.

As usual, St. John gives an account of our Lord's spiritual teaching. But he by no means neglects to chronicle certain facts which really constituted this teaching a great turning-point in the history. It led, he tells us, to the effectual breaking up of our Lord's following, and even to the threatened desertion of the Twelve.

With regard to the main history, instead of passing it by as usual in absolute silence, St. John covers the period by the briefest summary (vii. 1): As to the Synoptic half of the section, St. Matthew and St. Mark deal with the main current of events, and alone supply the full history of the period. But whereas up to this point they have differed as to the sequence in which they have arranged events, here they are at one in this matter. St. Luke therefore has no cause to go again over the ground which they have sufficiently covered, and thus persistently omits nearly everything which they record.

Clearly a knowledge of the events related by St. Matthew and St. Mark is absolutely essential to enable any one to read St. Luke's narrative with intelligence; nor without postulating design can we easily imagine why St. Luke should all of a sudden have left so large a gap in his history as at this point he does.

It is true he repeats much which St. Matthew and St.

Mark relate in connection with the Transfiguration. But here he has fresh and explanatory matter to add.

Nor can we fail to observe that his repetition in this case serves to keep his narrative in touch with the other narratives, *i.e.* to mark where his record rejoins theirs, and so to prepare the way for his again breaking off from them, and for a considerable period covering entirely new ground.

Contrasting the construction of this section with the next but one, we observe that whereas here St. John summarises the history and St. Matthew and St. Mark expand it, there St. John gives the fuller history, whilst St. Matthew and St. Mark summarise it.

On no point have commentators differed more widely than as to the date and the position in the history which they assign to the Transfiguration, a fact which has greatly tended to lessen the significance really belonging to it.

This has been manifestly due to the extent to which the whole history has been confused by the position of Luke xi. 14–xiii. 21.

When this is read as part of the earlier Parabolic Teaching at Capernaum, the Transfiguration falls naturally into its place as the grand closing scene of our Lord's ministerial labours, and the singularly appropriate "beginning of the end" spoken of in Luke ix. 50.

That the time of year assigned to the Transfiguration in our Calendar (Aug. 6) is proximately correct, we can well imagine. It was certainly some little time before the Feast of Tabernacles, and could not therefore have been much later.

That the events related could possibly have happened in midwinter or in the height of the rainy season, as so many harmonists would have us believe, seems as improbable in itself as it is inconsistent with the requirements of the several narratives.

### FIFTH SECTIONAL HISTORY

### *Jesus' Final Visit to Capernaum*

The Johannean half of this section records only the incidents immediately affecting our Lord's contemplated visit to the Feast of Tabernacles.

That a knowledge of this proposed journey was necessary to make the Synoptic narratives intelligible is obvious. Yet all three in succession fail to make any allusion to it.

St. Matthew alone gives the full record of the teaching specially characteristic of the occasion, and alone mentions our Lord's remarkable definition of His relation to the Jews, and the miraculous payment of the tribute money by which it was enforced.

Thus the two Apostolic Evangelists practically exhaust the history.

St. Mark merely reintroduces a few minor incidents about the subordinate actors.

St. Luke merely makes the briefest allusion to the period, and that in a record half of which is peculiar to his own history.

Here we have a conspicuous instance of the way in which both St. Mark and St. Luke omit the more and not the less important portions of St. Matthew's narrative.

The extreme brevity of St. Luke's narrative is also a striking illustration of his repeating St. Matthew and St. Mark merely for the purpose of showing where his narrative breaks off from theirs.

We are all familiar with the discussions arising from our Lord's supposed declaration that He did not intend to go up to the Feast of Tabernacles.

It is interesting therefore to note that in an early commentary on Tatian's Harmony, it is specifically stated that Jesus did not say "I go not up to," but I go not up "at" this feast. The commentator must therefore have had before him a reading of this text not now extant in any manuscript. If our Lord really said, "I ascend not at this feast," the saying would merely represent a "play upon words" by no means without parallel in other sayings.

The expression, "My time is *not yet* come," would also present a striking contrast to the note of time with which St. Luke introduces the next journey, "When the time *was* come that He should be received up."

## SIXTH SECTIONAL HISTORY

### *From the Feast of Tabernacles to the Last Entry into Jerusalem*

In the present section St. John's record is the longest, and, apart from the incidents of certain journeys, entirely covers the area of narration.

St. Matthew and St. Mark, abruptly ceasing from what up to this point had been a full history of events, cover nearly the whole of the area of narration occupied by St. John by the briefest of summaries. Having done this they at once pass on to describe events, all of which, according to St. Luke, immediately preceded the final entry into Jerusalem. Thus they repeat nothing found in St. John, though, as we shall see, their summaries imply that they knew of much which might have been recorded.

St. Luke deals in succession with the several portions of the area of narration which St. John leaves blank. Omitting the designedly "secret" journey to the Feast of Tabernacles, he records the events of journeys which in everything correspond with the journeys implied in St. John's narrative.

Without St. John's narrative St. Luke's would be unintelligible; nor is it easy to conceive that unless he was intentionally supplementing St. John's record, he would have given an account of successive journeys without any mention of the object for which they were undertaken.

At the end of the section St. Luke repeats a small portion of the records of St. Matthew and St. Mark. He thus not only shows where his own narrative rejoins theirs, but explains what greatly needed explanation, viz. the actual time at which the events which they record took place.

The whole history of this section has been confused by the unhistorical position of Luke xi. 14–xiii. 21. It will therefore be especially desirable at this point to show exactly how, apart from this source of confusion, the several narratives fit into each other.

I will first state very shortly what the contributions are which the several Evangelists make to the history.

St. John (vii. 12–viii. 59) tells us that Jesus having gone

up privately to the Feast of Tabernacles, taught in the temple; and that though the Pharisees and chief priests sought to arrest Him, He continued His teaching until an attempt was made to stone Him, when He escaped and "hid Himself."

St. Matthew deals with the events of the whole period, some six months, in the following words: "And it came to pass, when Jesus had finished these words, He departed from Galilee, and came into the borders of Judæa beyond Jordan; and great multitudes followed Him; and He healed them there" (xix. 1, 2).

St. Mark's record is to the same effect.

It is only at quite the end of the period that St. Matthew and St. Mark take up the history *exactly where St. John leaves it*, and tell of Jesus' last return to Jerusalem.

St. Luke (ix. 51), entirely ignoring the intervening visit to the Feast of Tabernacles, and presumably taking up the history *exactly where St. John first leaves a blank*, says, "And when the time came that He should be received up, Jesus set His face steadfastly to go to Jerusalem" (ix. 50).

The main events of this journey are the sending out of and the instructions given to the Seventy, and the delivery of the Parable of the Good Samaritan. The journey would presumably be completed before the winter rains of November and December set in.

To this latter season, therefore, we must apply the statement that "Martha received Him into her house."

Here then we must picture our Lord residing until the Feast of Dedication.

St. John then carries on the history.

After telling how Jesus had excited the anger of the Pharisees by healing a blind man on the Sabbath day and by a subsequent discourse on their own blindness, St. John says, "And at that time it was the Feast of the Dedication. It was winter, and Jesus was walking in the temple in Solomon's porch." Here the Jews challenge Him to declare His true character; and on His declaring Himself to be one with the Father, they take up stones to stone Him; and on His further declaring, "The Father is in me, and I in the Father," they again seek to take Him, but "He went forth out of their hand."

Jesus now, leaving the house of Martha and Mary, goes "AGAIN" beyond Jordan, "into the place where John was at the first baptizing; and there He abode. And many came unto Him, and they said, John, indeed, did no sign: but all things whatsoever John spoke of this man were true. And many believed on Him there."

By the word "AGAIN" St. John implies that this was the same district to which Jesus had retired after the Feast of Tabernacles. We may therefore suppose this to be the scene of the Healing noticed in St. Matthew's summary, and of the Teaching recorded in St. Mark's summary.

St. Luke (xi. 1–13) now comes in with a record which, even if its sequence did not imply it, would manifestly suggest that it belonged to this time and place.

One of the disciples, he tells us, asked Jesus to teach them to pray, "as John also taught his disciples." And Jesus having first taught them the Lord's Prayer, proceeded to deliver the Parable of the Three Loaves, and to enlarge upon the certainty of their prayers being heard by God.

St. John (xi. 1–16) again shows us how this teaching was interrupted, and yet another visit to Jerusalem brought about.

There came to Jesus a message from His late hosts, Martha and Mary, saying, "Lord, behold, he whom Thou lovest is sick."

For two days Jesus apparently took no notice of the message; but at the end of that time He announced that Lazarus was dead, and proposed to the disciples that He should go into Judæa again and restore him to life,—a proposal which seemed to Thomas to involve certain death, alike to Himself and His followers. St. Luke (xiii. 22–xvi. 31) again takes up the narrative. Jesus, he tells us, "went on His way through cities and villages, teaching, and journeying on towards Jerusalem."

It must have been during the first stages of this journey that, being told of Herod's intention to kill Him, Jesus sent the message that He should perform cures on that and the following day, and that on the third day He should be perfected.

Can we reasonably refuse to connect this saying with the time which we know, as a matter of fact, this journey occupied?

One of the days included in the journey being a Sabbath, Jesus, having gone into the house of one of the chief Pharisees to eat bread, healed a man with the dropsy, and spoke the Parable of the Great Supper.

On resuming His journey, seeing the multitudes which flocked round Him, He specially addressed them on the difficulties and trials which His service would involve.

And the Pharisees, being angry at the manner in which he welcomed publicans and sinners, Jesus addressed to them the Parables of the Lost Sheep, of the Piece of Silver, of the Prodigal Son, of the Unjust Steward, and of Dives and Lazarus.

Thus the last recorded words spoken at the conclusion of this journey, undertaken for the purpose of raising Lazarus, were, "Neither will they believe though one rose from the dead,"—a prophecy which could not well have been more strikingly fulfilled than by the events which immediately followed upon the raising of Lazarus.

Once more St. John (xi. 17–46) takes up the history when Jesus arrived at Bethany.

He found that Lazarus, having been buried immediately after death, had already lain in the grave four days, *i.e.* the time occupied by the journey which St. Luke describes. And when Jesus had raised Lazarus from the dead the chief priests and Pharisees, exactly fulfilling the prediction just alluded to, "gathered a council," and from that day forward took counsel together to put Him to death.

"Jesus therefore went thence unto a country near to the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim, and there He tarried with His disciples."

For the last time St. Luke (xvii. 1-xviii. 14) fills in the history.

Either on His way to Ephraim, or during His residence there, Jesus discourses on offences, and the duty of ungrudging forgiveness, lessons which might well have been suggested by the recent action of the Pharisees; and on the disciples asking Him to increase their faith, speaks of the power of faith, and warns them that even when they have done all they must still count themselves unprofitable servants.

And as they were again on the way to Jerusalem, and

passing between Samaria and Galilee, Jesus healed ten men that were lepers.

And being asked of the Pharisees when the kingdom of God should come, He discoursed at length on the coming of the Son of Man, and spoke the Parables of the Unjust Judge, and of the Publican and Pharisee going up together into the temple to pray.

It is at this point that St. Luke's narrative once more rejoins that of St. Matthew and St. Mark, and with theirs carries the history on to the entry into Jerusalem.

We are now in a position to consider two or three of the more important points of agreement between St. John's and St. Luke's narratives.

All four Evangelists recorded the last visit to Capernaum.

St. John alone tells of the visit to the Feast of Tabernacles.

This journey being made "as it were in secret," it was perfectly natural that St. Luke should have nothing to say about it.

But the journey which he does record was pre-eminently a public one, whilst its distinctly missionary character marks it out as specially suited to the genius of St. Luke's history.

We are bound to suppose that this journey ended before the rainy season (November and December) set in.

That at the close of this journey our Lord was received into the house of Martha and Mary we know.

Apart from the extreme improbability of our Lord's having travelled in the rainy season, the indications of this visit being a prolonged one are numerous.

"Martha *received Him into her house.*"

"Martha was cumbered about much serving."

"Mary sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word."

"Behold, he *whom Thou lovest* is sick."

"I am glad for your sakes that *I was not there.*"

"Lord, *if Thou hadst been here.*"

"Behold, *how He loved him.*"

The wording of all these notices raises a strong presumption in favour of the idea that the connection between Jesus and the family at Bethany was such as might naturally arise from long and repeated visits made to them.

It is therefore no matter of surprise that a truthful record

of events should only be comprehensible on the supposition that the visit mentioned by St. Luke (x. 38–42) was one of some duration.

From St. John we learn how this visit was suddenly brought to an end, and how shortly afterwards those who had so recently entertained Him at once took steps to make known to Him the trouble which had overtaken them. If St. John's and St. Luke's narratives were meant to "fit in" to each other as closely as they appear to do, Jesus may have been actually discoursing on the efficacy of prayer at the very time at which His late hosts made their distress known to Him. Whilst the manner in which He acted upon the message received, would be a singularly striking commentary upon the purposes for which an answer to such a prayer may be delayed.

Once more St. Luke's narrative of a journey fits in exactly with the journey only alluded to in St. John's narrative.

In order to understand the perfect adjustment between St. John's and St. Luke's narratives, it is essential that the reader should bear in mind one remarkable but clearly defined and constantly recurring peculiarity of Gospel construction, viz. the constant breaks in the continuity of narration which every Gospel exhibits.

In our present section this peculiarity becomes the standing rule of St. Luke's construction.

The commencement of three separate journeys are marked indeed by three separate notices. But otherwise there is nothing save St. John's Gospel to indicate either the object of the journeys or the fact of more than one journey being dealt with. The separate notices are as follows:—

1. Luke ix. 51: "And it came to pass when the time was come that He should be received up, He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem."

2. Luke xiv. 22: "And He went through the cities and villages, teaching, and journeying towards Jerusalem."

3. Luke xvii. 11: "And it came to pass as He went to Jerusalem, that He passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee,"

The three separate notices of destination would, of course, be rather suggestive of separate journeys. Whilst the fact that

the visit to Martha and Mary intervenes between the first and second notice, would of itself be inconsistent with the theory of a single journey. But otherwise we have absolutely nothing save the Gospel of St. John either to tell us that there were three journeys, or to enable us to understand the object of the first two of them.

In no other section is the fact of St. Luke having written with St. John's Gospel before him more clearly proved than in the present.

To believe the contrary, we must not only suppose all the marvellous and consistently maintained concordances between the narratives to be purely accidental, but we must suppose that St. Luke gave an account of at least two journeys without the slightest reference to the purpose for which they were undertaken, and that he trusted in some future writer supplying the information so conspicuously withheld and yet so essential for the understanding of his own history.

Scarcely less strong is the evidence that St. Matthew wrote with St. John before him. Why, if he had not, should he abruptly break off his detailed narrative and cover the period treated by St. John by a brief summary?

The events which St. Matthew thus ignores—the visits to Jerusalem, the teaching and events there, the attempts on our Lord's life, the raising of Lazarus—stand unsurpassed for their intrinsic importance. Why did St. Matthew not only ignore them, but go out of his way to change his plan of writing in order to do so? That St. Mark should have followed St. Matthew's example in this respect is only another instance of the peculiar connection between his and St. Matthew's records.

But apart from this connection, the evidence of his having written with St. John's Gospel before him would be equally strong in his case.

### SEVENTH SECTIONAL HISTORY

*From the Anointing at Bethany to the Last Passover*

This section presents a striking contrast to that which we have just been considering.

In the last section St. John's was the longest narrative, and dealt at great length on our Lord's teaching in the

temple,— this teaching being as usual of an eminently doctrinal and personal character.

In this section St. Matthew's narrative is the longest, and in turn deals with teaching which, whether given in the temple or elsewhere, was of a totally different character to that recorded by St. John.

Here, as usual, St. John records the first event and distinct starting-point of the history—the anointing at Bethany. It is true that St. Matthew and St. Mark relate this incident in connection with the action of Judas.

But supposing the incident to have been already recorded by St. John, it was perfectly natural that they should have omitted it in their abbreviated history.

At the same time, the fact of their briefly reintroducing it in the connection they do, is amply accounted for by their manifest desire to show the bearing of this event on the ultimate conduct of Judas.

The actual entry into Jerusalem is naturally mentioned by all four writers.

The visit of certain Greeks, and the teaching and incidents connected with that visit, thus constitute the only portion of St. John's narrative which is wholly unnoticed by the Synoptists.

Again the balance of the history as between St. John and St. Matthew is perfect.

St. Mark, though he gives a good deal of fresh information, presents us with a narrative little more than half the length of St. Matthew.

Here, too, St. Luke finds the area of narration so much preoccupied, that his narrative is little more than a third of the length of St. Matthew, and considerably shorter than that of St. Mark.

Thus the narratives of St. Mark and St. Luke are only just long enough to serve the purposes of corroboration and identification.

Yet even in this section, expansion in the direction of subject-matter peculiarly characteristic of St. Mark and St. Luke is not entirely wanting.

The instruction of the disciples by the example of the widow casting her mite into the treasury is found only in St.

Mark and St. Luke. Whilst the discourse following the prediction of the destruction of Jerusalem is greatly enlarged by them in the direction of the conduct and future fortunes of the disciples.

### EIGHTH SECTIONAL HISTORY

### *The Last Supper*

Once more St. John and St. Matthew divide the area of narration between them.

St. John's narrative is longer than all the other narratives put together, being more than twice as long as St. Matthew's, and more than four times as long as either St. Mark's or St. Luke's.

Hence to call St. John's a supplemental narrative would simply be a misuse of language.

The fact that St. John omits all reference to the actual Institution of the Lord's Supper, however remarkable it may seem, is strictly in accordance with his invariable reticence as to all matters of a distinctly ministerial kind.

So far as St. John meant to deal with the subject, he dealt with it by recording the discourse at Capernaum. The practical application of that teaching he treats as lying outside his purpose of proving Jesus to be the Christ, whilst the former teaching was clearly all-sufficient to constitute the basis of saving faith which he desired to provide.

St. Luke's narrative is here especially remarkable for the large amount of entirely new history with which it supplies us, and also for the explanatory character of his account of the Institution of the Lord's Supper.

He alone mentions the "first Cup," and in connection with it records words of our Lord which St. Matthew and St. Mark in their more compressed narrative relate in connection with "the Cup after Supper."

The suspicion of discrepancy between St. Luke's and the other two narratives at this point may well have been the cause why St. Paul should have given what is virtually a fourth account of the Institution.

Again, supposing St. John's to have been the first Gospel, the fact of his passing the subject over in silence may well

have acted as a further reason for St. Paul adopting the exceedingly exceptional course which he does.

Clearly when out of all the events in the Gospel history St. Paul singles out one only and records it in Gospel language as though himself an Evangelist, we may well assume that he had some reason for doing what he does.

Nor would it seem reasonable to resist the inference that his not dealing in the same way with other Gospel incidents was not because he was not acquainted with the Gospels, but because, save in this one exceptional case, their records needed neither supplementing nor explaining.

### NINTH SECTIONAL HISTORY

*From the Last Supper to our Lord's Arrest*

Again St. John and St. Matthew divide the historical area between them, whilst St. Mark and St. Luke amplify St. Matthew's side of the history.

Manifestly the agony in the garden has to do exclusively with the human side of our Lord's character, and is therefore as alien to St. John's point of view as it is consistent with that of St. Matthew.

As is so often the case with the closing scenes of the history, St. John's is incomparably the longest narrative.

As the history of our Lord's arrest forms the subject of one of our fourfold narratives, we may pass it by for the present.

### TENTH SECTIONAL HISTORY

*From our Lord's Arrest to the Early Morning*

Here St. John alone records the first examination of our Lord before Annas, and only briefly alludes to His being sent to Caiaphas.

St. Matthew gives the supplementary record of the second examination, and of incidents connected with it, and carries on the history so as to include an account of the remorse and death of Judas.

St. Mark also deals with the second examination, adding,

as usual, further particulars about the accusers and other details.

St. Luke alone mentions the third examination, viz. that before the Council, and its conclusive result.

The particular distribution of events amongst the several evangelists constitutes this section a peculiarly striking illustration of the normal construction of the fourfold record.

## ELEVENTH SECTIONAL HISTORY

### *The Trial before Pilate*

It seems wholly impossible to deny the fact that we have only one account of Jesus' trial by Pilate, and of Pilate's conduct as a judge, and that this account is given by St. John. The other records leave nearly all the main facts of the trial untouched. As usual they deal with supplemental details, and with the conduct of outside and subordinate actors in the scenes, of which St. John alone enables us to form any adequate conception.

It is not only that St. John alone gives all the chief events of the trial, but he alone supplies the framework into which the other narratives have to be fitted. Nor can we forget that in doing this he does precisely what he does in the main history.

Even if we could see our way to explain St. Matthew's treatment of this section of the history, and were to assume that the same explanation extended to St. Mark's record, we should still have to account for the form of St. Luke's narrative. The extent to which it is supplemental to the others seems, of itself, sufficient to prove that had all the ground covered by St. John been unoccupied, he would not have allowed it to remain so.

Regarded as a supplemental and explanatory record, St. Luke's method of treating the history is transparently simple. As an independent narrative, or a narrative influenced only by St. Matthew's and St. Mark's records, it seems wholly unintelligible.

The reader will doubtless observe that in their greatly abbreviated histories, both St. Matthew and St. Mark only

mention the scourging and mocking incidentally, and in connection with the final sentence.

They thus really mention these incidents "out of order."

Why then does not St. Luke, according to his otherwise almost invariable custom, so write as to make the true order of events plain?

I answer, this is just one of those exceptions which prove the rule.

The true order of events having been given by St. John, the abbreviated records of St. Matthew and St. Mark could not be misunderstood. Instead, therefore, of dealing with their narratives, he deals with St. John's, and gives an additional means of fixing the exact time of the scourging and mocking by recording the preliminary sentence, "I will therefore chastise Him, and let Him go."

Clearly, the extent to which St. Luke's is a *fresh* narrative must be considered with due reference to its subject-matter.

Out of 372 words, 257 give fresh details.

The meaning of this fact is (1) that just where the ground is uncovered by either of the other Evangelists, St. Luke covers it; and (2) that where the ground is covered, there St. Luke is either wholly silent, or just makes his narrative hold together by the briefest of summaries.

Let us forget that this fact represents the relation always existing between St. Luke's and the other records, and examine the fact as it stands in this section alone.

By what conceivable hypothesis could any one even then suggest that the fact in this instance could be accidental?

## TWELFTH SECTIONAL HISTORY

### *The Crucifixion*

Let us define the documents making up the record of this section.

St. John's is a document giving a full record of the most important events connected with the Crucifixion. In the main it is confined to strictly personal details.

St. Matthew's is a document almost exclusively dealing with the conduct of persons present at the Crucifixion.

Thus St. Matthew describes the conduct (*a*) of Simon of Cyrene, (*b*) of those that passed by, (*c*) of the chief priests, (*d*) of the thieves, (*e*) of those who heard the cry, Eli, Eli, (*f*) of the centurion, (*g*) of those who beheld the earthquake, (*h*) of the Galilæan women.

The two documents together thus give a twofold primary representation of the event.

St. Mark's is a document wholly corroborative of St. Matthew's record. The fresh information contained in it is, without exception, given by the alteration or expansion of sentences found in St. Matthew.

St. Luke's is a document in which details, given by St. John or St. Matthew, are either greatly abbreviated or wholly omitted. But it contains a large amount of supplementary information. In two instances (the prayer for His murderers, and the commendation of His Spirit to the Father) the additions are strictly personal to our Lord. Otherwise, like St. Matthew's, they tell of the conduct of outside actors in the scene, *i.e.* (*a*) of the women of Jerusalem, (*b*) of the rulers, (*c*) of the soldiers, (*d*) of the penitent thief, (*e*) of the centurion, (*f*) of Jesus' acquaintance, (*g*) of the multitude.

Thus the mere definition of the documents at once establishes what is practically the same relation between them as is observable between the Gospels considered in their entirety.

That the relation of the documents indicated by the above definition extends to matters of detail, may be shown by two exceptionally striking illustrations.

St. John records both the cry "I thirst" and the action of the bystanders which resulted from it.

St. Matthew and St. Mark both record the action resulting from the cry, but both assume that the cause of the action was known.

Again St. John alone records the saying, "It is finished." The other Evangelists all omit the cry, but all relate the manner in which it was uttered.

In both the above instances it seems inconceivable that unless the main fact on which their narratives turn had been already on record, three writers in succession would all fail to mention it. Clearly, unless in each case it was assumed

to be known, their narratives would be at least comparatively unintelligible. Thus in both cases each of three writers would be found leaving out the very point most required to make what he says intelligible.

### THIRTEENTH SECTIONAL HISTORY

#### *The Burial*

Here St. John alone gives the complete evidence of the reality of our Lord's death.

It again seems inconceivable that unless it was already on record, the whole of such evidence should be passed over in silence by three successive writers. St. John also is the only one who gives the full history of the burial and records the part taken by Nicodemus.

St. Matthew merely summarises in the briefest possible terms, and in St. John's language, certain facts connected with the burial. He also adds the purely supplemental facts (*a*) of a stone being rolled against the door of the sepulchre, and (*b*) of the presence of Mary Magdalene and the other Mary.

St. Mark explains the term "the Preparation," gives further particulars about Joseph of Arimathea, tells of Pilate questioning whether Jesus were already dead, alludes to the evidence of the centurion, mentions the purchase of the fine linen, and relates the fact of Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Jesus seeing where the body was laid.

St. Luke again gives further and altogether fresh particulars about Joseph of Arimathea and the Galilæan women.

### FOURTEENTH SECTIONAL HISTORY

#### *The Resurrection*

It may be safely assumed that if the four Gospels were wholly independent documents, each writer, no matter what He left out elsewhere, would be anxious not to omit anything which was essential to the establishing the truth of the Resurrection.

It was essentially "the Gospel" of the early Church.

Hence each writer would have been anxious above all things to record instances of our Lord's having appeared to persons able to testify to such appearances.

Let us see what the several writers really do.

St. John gives details of our Lord's appearing to Mary Magdalene, of His appearing twice to the assembled Apostles, and again of His appearing to five of the Apostles at the Sea of Tiberias. With reference to the last appearance he says specifically, "This is now the third time that Jesus showed Himself to His disciples after He was risen from the dead" (xxi. 14). Thus he shows that he was specially anxious to make up a cycle of appearances supplementing the appearance to Mary, and with it constituting evidence which, if admitted, no one could possibly gainsay.

Compare this with what St. Matthew does. St. Matthew does not make the very slightest allusion to any one of the above appearances.

Whereas in St. John the account of them occupies the greater part of two chapters, St. Matthew only finds material to occupy two verses. Whilst in these he only records a *second* appearance to Mary Magdalene.

At the same time, he does here just what he does in every parallel case, he supplies the historical details which St. John omits—events which happened prior to, at the time of, and subsequent to, the Resurrection, viz. the earthquake, the appearance of the angel of the Lord, the sealing of the sepulchre, and the bribing of the Roman guard.

As usual, both St. Mark and St. Luke follow the lead of St. Matthew. St. Mark, however, adds a brief reference to the first appearance to Mary and the first appearance to the assembled Apostles.

St. Luke, again, after making the briefest allusion to Peter's visit to the tomb, shows that the appearance to the assembled Apostles was not merely an apparition, and relates in detail an appearance to two of the outer circle of disciples.

It can hardly be necessary to point out how greatly St. John's narrative would be discredited if we were compelled to suppose that the other three Evangelists wrote first, and left out nearly all that he relates.

# CHAPTER VI

## TEN FOURFOLD NARRATIVES

### I. THE FEEDING OF THE FIVE THOUSAND

Jn. vi. 1–21. Mt. xiv. 12–33. Mk. vi. 29–53. Lk. ix. 10–17

In this narrative St. John alone records a number of facts which belong to the very essence of the history, as—

1. The season at which the miracle took place — the Passover.
2. The fact that Jesus knew what He would do.
3. The part played by Philip and Andrew.
4. The command to gather up the fragments.
5. The effect of the miracle upon the multitude.
6. The design to make Jesus a king.
7. The reason why Jesus sent the disciples away and remained Himself on land.
8. The instantaneous arrival of the boat at its destination.

These are all facts which would not only have occupied the very forefront of the consciousness of any independent historian, but they are absolutely essential to an intelligent comprehension of what really happened.

Omitting all these facts, St. Matthew partly abbreviates and partly expands certain details of St. John's record, and adds the important incident about St. Peter.

St. Mark follows St. Matthew's narrative so closely that his omission of the incident about St. Peter can hardly be otherwise than intentional.

St. Luke follows St. Matthew closely up to a certain point, but omits all reference to the return voyage.

As to the whole of the narrative, both the number and the importance of the incidents related only by St. John make the one-sidedness of St. Matthew's record unusually conspicuous.

At the same time, in spite of their having such materials as those supplied by St. John at their disposal, St. Mark and St. Luke both reproduce the one-sidedness of St. Matthew.

### II. THE ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM

Jn. xii. 9–19. Mt. xxi. 1–11. Mk. xi. 1–10. Lk. xix. 29–44

Here St. John alone records—

1. That it was to see Lazarus that the people came together.

2. That it was the effect upon the multitude of the raising of Lazarus that enraged the chief priests.

3. That a multitude assembled at Bethany, and that another multitude came out from Jerusalem.

4. That the disciples did not at the time understand the significance of all that happened.

St. Matthew covers the same area of narration as St. John more closely than usual.

But when St. John abbreviates, St. Matthew expands the narrative; whilst, where St. John expands, St. Matthew abbreviates.

Thus St. John writes, "And Jesus having found a young ass, sat thereon." St. Matthew, on the other hand, explains at length, though not nearly at such great length as St. Mark and St. Luke, what really happened in connection with this incident.

Again St. John writes, "The multitude therefore that was with Him when He called Lazarus out of the tomb, and raised him from the dead, bare witness. For this cause also the multitude went and met Him, for that they heard that He had done this sign."

St. Matthew abbreviates this into, "the multitudes that went before and that followed," and then proceeds to expand St. John's statement that they "bare witness."

Owing to the closeness with which they both cover the

same ground, the division of subject between St. John and St. Matthew is somewhat less obvious than usual.

On the other hand, owing to their all adopting the same methods of abbreviating and expanding St. John's narrative, the agreement between the three Synoptists is even more marked than usual.

### III. THE BETRAYAL

Jn. xviii. 2–11. Mt. xxvi. 47–56. Mk. xiv. 43–52. Lk. xxii. 47–53

Here St. John alone tells us—

1. That the scene was a garden.

2. That Judas knew the place to be the usual resort of Jesus and the disciples.

3. That the arrest was an official act, carried out by a band of soldiers accompanied by the officials of the chief priests and Pharisees.

4. That Jesus knew what would happen.

5. That He at once declared His identity.

6. That His would-be captors fell to the ground.

7. That a second time He admitted His identity, and asked that His disciples might go free.

8. That the wounded servant's name was Malchus.

9. That Jesus said, "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" and, finally,

10. That Jesus was not only seized, but bound.

St. Matthew speaks only of the accompanying multitude.

As to the conduct of Jesus Himself, though it belongs to the very essence of the history, St. Matthew passes it over in absolute silence, and enlarges only on subsidiary details, or on matters which concerned subordinate actors.

In spite of the wholly exceptional importance of the events left unrecorded by St. Matthew, both St. Mark and St. Luke follow the latter closely.

Thus the present narrative affords an unusually striking instance alike of the division of the subject between St. John and St. Matthew, and of the extent to which St. Mark and St. Luke deal with the same side of it as St. Matthew.

## IV. ST. PETER'S DENIALS

*First Prediction of Denial*

Jn. xiii. 36–38. Simon Peter said unto Him, Lord, whither goest Thou? Jesus answered him, Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards.

Peter said unto Him, Lord, Why cannot I follow Thee now? I will lay down my life for Thy sake.

Jesus answered him, Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice.

Lk. xxii. 33, 34. And he said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with Thee, both into prison, and to death.

And He said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me.

*Second Prediction of Denial*

Mt. xxvi. 33–35. Peter answered and said unto Him, Though all men should be offended because of Thee, yet will I never be offended.

Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.

Peter said unto Him, Though I should die with Thee, yet will I not deny Thee. Likewise also said all the disciples.

Mk. xiv. 29–31. But Peter said unto Him, Although all shall be offended, yet will not I.

And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this day, even in this night, before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice.

But he spake the more vehemently, If I should die with Thee, I will not deny Thee in any wise. Likewise also said they all.

*First Denial at Entrance Door*

Jn. xviii. 15–17. And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple: that disciple was known unto the high priest, and went in with Jesus into the palace of the high priest.

But Peter stood at the door without. Then went out that other disciple, which was known unto the high priest, and spake unto her that kept the door, and brought in Peter.

Then saith the damsel that kept the door unto Peter, Art not thou also one of this man's disciples? He saith, I am not.

*Second Denial to a certain Maid, "Woman, I know Him not"*

Mt. xxvi. 69, 70. Now Peter sat without in the palace: and a damsel came unto him, saying, Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee.

But he denied before them all, saying, I know not what thou sayest.

Mk. xiv. 66–68*a*. And as Peter was beneath in the palace, there cometh one of the maids of the high priest;

And when she saw Peter warming himself, she looked upon him

and said, And thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth.

But he denied, saying, I know not, neither understand I what thou sayest.

Lk. xxii. 55-57. And when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the hall, and were set down together, Peter sat down among them.

But a certain maid beheld him as he sat by the fire, and earnestly looked upon him, and said, This man was also with Him.

And he denied Him, saying, Woman, I know Him not.

*Third Denial, "Man, I am not"*

Jn. xviii. 25. And Simon Peter stood and warmed himself. They said therefore unto him, Art thou not also one of His disciples? He denied it, and said, I am not.

Lk. xxii. 58. And after a little while, another saw him, and said, Thou art also of them. And Peter said, Man, I am not.

*Fourth Denial to Malchus's Kinsman*

Jn. xviii. 26, 27*a*. One of the servants of the high priest, being his kinsman whose ear Peter cut off, saith, Did not I see thee in the garden with Him?

Peter then denied again.

*The First Cock-Crow*

Jn. xviii. 27*b*. And immediately the cock crew.

Mk. xiv. 68*b*. And he went out into the porch: and the cock crew.

*Fifth Denial to a Maid in the Porch*

Mt. xxvi. 71, 72. And when he was gone out into the porch, another maid saw him, and said unto them that were there, This fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth.

And again he denied with an oath, I do not know the man.

Mk. xiv. 69. And a maid saw him again, and began to say to them that stood by, This is one of them.

And he denied it again.

*Sixth Denial with Cursing and Swearing*

Mt. xxvi. 73, 74. And after a while came unto him they that had stood by, and said to Peter, Surely thou also art one of them; for thy speech bewrayeth thee.

Then began he to curse and to swear, saying, I know not the man.

Mk. xiv. 70, 71. And he denied it again. And a little after they that stood by said again to Peter, Surely thou art one of them: for thou art a Galilæan, and thy speech agreeth thereto.

But he began to curse and to swear, saying, I know not this man of whom ye speak.

Lk. xxii. 59, 60. And about the space of one hour after, another confidently affirmed, saying, Of a truth this fellow also was with Him; for he is a Galilæan.

And Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest.

*The Second Cock-Crow*

Mt. xxvi. 74. Then began to curse and to swear, saying, I know not the man. And immediately the cock crew.

Mk. xiv. 72. And the second time the cock crew. And Peter called to mind the word that Jesus said unto him, Before

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| | the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice. And when he thought thereon, he wept. | And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. |
| Lk. xxii. 60, 61. | And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew. | |

Here St. John's and St. Matthew's narratives do not touch each other at a single point.

St. John records a first prediction, three denials, and the fulfilment of an appointed signal.

St. Matthew records a second prediction, three denials, all different from those recorded by St. John, and the fulfilment of an appointed signal, also different from that mentioned by St. John.

Thus, if the Gospels of St. John and St. Matthew had stood alone, there would have been no room for doubt that there were two separate predictions, and, unless standing and sitting meant the same thing, six separate denials. At the same time, as only one signal is mentioned, we should naturally have assumed that the cock-crowing recorded after the three denials mentioned by St. John was identical with the cock-crowing recorded after the three denials mentioned by St. Matthew.

St. Mark's narrative makes two distinct additions to St. Matthew's record—

1. He not only gives the full text of the second prediction as spoken on the way to Gethsemane, but he repeats the same version of it in connection with the final denial; and

2. He not only mentions both a first and second cock-crow, but he records the first cock-crow in a manner which clearly identifies it with the cock-crow also recorded by St. John.

Thus, St. Mark's two additions, slight as they are, at once serve to remove the only difficulty which a comparison of St. John's and St. Matthew's record would tend to suggest.

The explanatory effect of St. Luke's record turns entirely on the extent to which it enables us—

1. To identify the first prediction as recorded by St. John;

2. To identify the different denials as recorded respectively by St. John and St. Matthew; and,

3. To account for the apparent insufficiency of the time

which St. Matthew's narrative would seem to allow for the last two denials recorded by St. John.

St. Luke's testimony clearly supports St. John's as to the terms and the time of the first prediction.

We have next to see how St. Luke enables us to identify the different denials.

Apart from his testimony there would have appeared to have been strong reason for supposing that what we may term the two fireside denials were only different versions of the same incident.

St. Luke furnishes three reasons why this could not be so.

1. He records both incidents.

2. He strongly emphasises the fact omitted by St. Matthew, but mentioned by St. Mark, that the first fireside denial was spoken by St. Peter whilst *sitting* by the fire, whereas the fireside denial recorded by St. John took place when he was *standing*.

3. He shows that whilst the first fireside denial was addressed to a woman, the second was addressed to a man—the denial in one case being, "Woman, I know him not," and in the other, "Man, I am not."

Again, we have to observe how St. Luke disposes of the merely apparent difficulty of there not having been time to allow for all that is recorded.

The narratives of St. Matthew, and to a less extent that of St. Mark, seem to imply that the fifth and sixth denials followed almost immediately upon the first fireside denial. The last two denials especially are closely linked together by the note of time, "after a little while."

St. Luke transfers this note of time to the second fireside denial, *i.e.* the third denial in all; whilst in his account of the sixth denial he substitutes for it the more express note of time, "after the space of about an hour."

Thus he not only indicates the quick succession of the two fireside denials in the same way that St. Matthew and St. Mark indicate the quick succession of the last two denials, but he leaves the space of one hour for the fourth denial (*i.e.* the last mentioned by St. John), for the incident of the first cock-crowing, for the closely-connected fifth and sixth denials, and for the second cock-crowing.

If we had to select any one concrete example of the extent to which the Gospel record is simplified by placing St. John's narrative first, and recognising the manner in which the main history is divided between St. John and St. Matthew, we could not, I think, possibly select a better than that which the above narrative affords.

The division of subject between St. John and St. Matthew is of the most complete kind. They give not only different predictions, but different denials. St. Mark and St. Luke simply explain the Apostolic records.

### V. TRIAL BEFORE PILATE. (FIRST PART.)

Jn. xviii. 28–38. Mt. xxvii. 1, 2. Mk. xv. 1–5. Lk. xxiii. 1–12

St. John alone gives all the main facts of the history.

St. Matthew, St. Mark, and St. Luke all make the same brief reference to a portion of a conversation between Jesus and Pilate, which St. John gives at length.

Otherwise St. Matthew and St. Mark merely tell of the conduct of the chief priests and elders, and of Pilate's surprise at Jesus refusing to answer them.

St. Luke gives particulars (*a*) of the first and more formal accusation otherwise alluded to only by St. John, and (*b*) of the more tumultuous accusations otherwise only briefly alluded to by St. Matthew and St. Mark. In the latter case he gives the key to the conduct of Pilate in sending Jesus to Herod, an incident which he alone relates.

It will thus be seen that although Pilate's conduct forms a connecting link between St. John's and the other narratives, the latter are not only incomparably briefer than St. John's, and in every sense supplementary, but they are as nearly as possible independent of St. John's record. Apart from Pilate, Jesus Himself is the main subject of St. John's narrative, whilst the chief priests and elders, the multitude, and finally, in the case of St. Luke, Herod, are the main subjects of the other historians.

As usual, St. Luke is silent as to matters related by the other Evangelists, but finds fresh details of singular importance to record.

At the same time, where an explanatory purpose can be served, he does not fail partly to repeat and partly to supplement St. John's narrative.

### VI. TRIAL BEFORE PILATE. (SECOND PART.)

Jn. xviii. 39–xix. 16. Mt. xxvii. 15–31. Mk. xv. 6–20. Lk. xxiii. 13–25

St. John alone relates—

1. Pilate's statement about the custom of release, *i.e.* the statement to which all the details given by the other Evangelists are supplementary.

2. The summary which the Synoptists expand, "now Barabbas was a robber."

3. The scourging of Jesus in its historical connection.

4. Pilate's conversations with Jesus.

5. The stages by which Pilate was at last brought to give in to the popular clamour.

St. Matthew gives particulars as to (*a*) the custom of release; (*b*) Pilate's controversy with the chief priests; (*c*) the motives which influenced the chief priests; (*d*) the conduct of Pilate's wife; (*e*) Pilate's handwashing; and (*f*) the imprecation of the people, "His blood be upon us and our children."

St. Mark gives details as to (*a*) Barabbas; (*b*) the scene of the mockery, and (*c*) Pilate's motives for yielding to the people.

St. Luke, conspicuously ignoring both facts and details recorded by his co-historians, again gives just that information which was required to enable us to form the other narratives into a complete whole.

Thus he alone tells (*a*) of Pilate's reassembling the Jews after the trial before Herod, so explaining St. Matthew's "when, therefore, they were gathered together"; (*b*) of Pilate's verdict and his reference to that of Herod; (*c*) of his determination to chastise Jesus and release Him; (*d*) of the second occasion on which he announced the same intention, and (*e*) of the judicial character of the sentence finally acted upon.

Without St. Luke's narrative it would be impossible to see how the other narratives fitted in to each other, or what really was the course which events took. With it everything is perfectly plain.

This is specially the case with regard to the double notice of Pilate's declaration of his intention to chastise and release Jesus. Without these notices, we should be wholly unable to reconcile St. John's record of the scourging with the later allusion to it made by St. Matthew and St. Mark.

We naturally ask, Why did not St. Matthew and St. Mark mention the scourging in its historical connection?

The obvious answer appears to be—

The scourging was an integral part of the death sentence. Thus in greatly abbreviated narratives they are naturally mentioned together. Had the scourging been mentioned in its order, it would have necessitated the recital of all that we learn from St. John's record. There we see that the fixed idea in Pilate's mind was to make the punishment of scourging serve as a compromise between the sentence of acquittal, which he would have preferred, and the death sentence demanded by the Jews.

The reader is asked to note especially—

1. That St. John alone relates the whole of Pilate's private examination of Jesus, *i.e.* the whole of what really constituted "the trial."

2. That the other Evangelists only show their acquaintance with the circumstances of this trial by the reference which they make in identical language to the two questions, "Art thou the King of the Jews?" and "Art thou a King then?" Each of the Synoptists combine and abbreviate the two parts of St. John's record in absolutely identical language. They all combine the first question with the beginning of the answer to the second question.

3. That the Synoptists' narratives all alike deal, not with the trial itself, but with the incidents which directly or indirectly were the result of the trial.

## VII. THE PARTING OF JESUS' GARMENTS

Jn. xix. 23, 24. Matt. xxvii. 35. Mk. xv. 24. Lk. xxiii. 34

From its very brevity this narrative affords a singularly crucial test of the statement of modern criticism, that St. John's Gospel is "the supplement of the three."

St. John alone tells us—

(*a*) Who were the actors in the scene.

(*b*) How many of them there were.

(*c*) Of the manner in which the garments were prepared for division.

(*d*) Of the reason for casting lots, viz.: because the addition of the coat made one set of garments more valuable than either of the other sets; and

(*e*) Of the designed fulfilment of Scripture.

Two points are especially noticeable.

1. It seems inconceivable that, save by design, three separate writers could all abbreviate such a narrative as St. John gives in precisely the same manner, and practically in identical language.

2. Neither of the Synoptic narratives apart from St. John's record would convey the faintest conception of the various circumstances which took place. Yet read in the light of his record, and as the briefest of abbreviations, they are seen to be minutely correct.

It would be quite conceivable that one writer should have made a brief allusion to the episode, and that a second writer should have supplemented his record by a full account of it. But we have to do with three writers, and with the fact that both St. Mark and St. Luke, when St. John does not cover the same ground, make a constant habit of supplementing and expanding St. Matthew.

## VIII. THE WRITING UPON THE CROSS

Jn. xix. 19–23. Matt. xxvii. 37. Mk. xv. 26. Lk. xxiii. 38

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| Jn. | And Pilate wrote a title also, and put it on the cross. |
| Mt. | And they set up over His head His accusation, written. |
| Mk. and Lk. | And the superscription of His accusation was written over. |
| Jn. | And there was written, |
| Mt. and Lk. | This is |
| Jn. and Mt. | Jesus |
| Jn. | Of Nazareth, |
| Jn. Mt. Mk. and Lk. | The King of the Jews. |
| Jn. | This title then read many of the Jews; for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city: and it was written in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin. Then said the chief priests of the Jews to Pilate, Write not, The King of the Jews; but that He said, I am the King of the Jews. Pilate answered, What I have written I have written. |

All the inferences suggested by the constructive facts of the last narrative equally apply to the present one.

St. John alone mentions—

(*a*) Who was the author of the superscription.

(*b*) The languages in which it was written.

(*c*) The offence which it caused; and

(*d*) The remonstrance of the chief priests, and Pilate's answer.

The facts as to the wording of the title exactly illustrate the principle of narration everywhere else observed.

St. John gave the title with the omission of the words, "This is."

St. Matthew supplied the omission, and left out what he thought it unnecessary to repeat, viz.: the expression "of Nazareth."

St. Mark abbreviates the title down to the point of identification, repeating the fewest words possible.

St Luke merely reintroduces and so confirms the "this is" of St. Matthew, and otherwise likewise repeats the fewest words possible.

Thus all the elaborate explanations to which the wording of the superscription has given rise are seen to be unnecessary.

Again, each of the Synoptists omits all the main incidents which make up the superscription episode.

### IX. THE BURIAL

Jn. xix. 38-42. Mt. xxvii. 57-61. Mk. xv. 42-47. Lk. xxii. 50-56

St. John alone mentions—

(*a*) The important part which Nicodemus took in the burial; and

(*b*) The locality of the tomb.

Both these facts belong to the very framework of the story.

Again, though St. John mentions both how the spices were provided and how they were used, the Synoptists all alike tell only of their use.

In other words, St. John alone mentions the primary fact, the other Evangelists the secondary.

It is clearly just the same principle of narration which we

saw governing the record of the trial before Pilate, and which leads St. John to relate both the cry "I thirst" and its results, whilst each of the Synoptists alike dwell only on the results.

In these, as in a multitude of similar though less striking instances, the Synoptists, unless they assumed the existence of St. John's record, not only act in a manner wholly inexplicable, but convey to their readers a singularly incomplete and even an erroneous impression.

At the same time, the character of the incidents omitted, no less than their close connection with what is related, renders it wholly impossible to attribute this reticence to want of knowledge.

St. Matthew, save for his mention of the rolling a stone against the sepulchre, practically gives nothing more than an abbreviation of certain parts of St. John's narrative.

St. Mark adds—

(*a*) An explanation of the term, The Preparation.

(*b*) Particulars about Joseph; and

(*c*) Pilate's interview with the centurion.

Thus, whilst his usual omissions of parts of St. Matthew's record are conspicuous only by their absence, his expansion of that record is precisely of the character which everywhere else distinguishes his Gospel.

St. Luke, as usual, expands St. Mark's expansion about Joseph. But otherwise has no fresh information to give, save that the company of women who followed to the tomb was larger than would have been supposed from St. Matthew's and St. Mark's narratives.

## X. THE RESURRECTION

Jn. xx., xxi. Mt. xxvii. 62–xxviii. 20. Mk. xvi. 1. Lk. xxiii. 56–xxiv. 53

### Analysis

Mt. On the morrow, that is, the sabbath, the chief priests and Pharisees obtain a guard from Pilate and make the sepulchre sure.

Lk. But the women who followed Jesus from Galilee rested according to the commandment.

Mt. And in the afternoon of the sabbath day, as it began to draw on towards the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary visit the sepulchre.

Mk. And when the sabbath was over, they and Salome brought spices to anoint Him.

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| Mt. | Now [some time before morning] a great earthquake took place, and an angel rolled away the stone, and sat upon it. And for fear the guards became as dead men. |
| Jn. | And while it was yet dark Mary Magdalene comes to the tomb. |
| Lk. | At early dawn she is joined by the women from Galilee, bringing the spices which they had prepared; |
| Mk. | and after sunrise by Mary the mother of James, and Salome. |
| | Then while they are asking one another how they can get the stone rolled away, they look up and see |
| Jn. Mk. Lk. | that it has been rolled away. |
| Lk. | And they entered in, and found not the body of Jesus. And as they were perplexed thereabout, behold, there appeared over against them two men; |
| Mk. | one of them, a young man, sitting on the right side of the tomb, and arrayed in a white robe, |
| Lk. | and both in dazzling apparel. |
| | And as they were affrighted, |
| Mk. | and amazed, |
| Lk. | and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, |
| Mt. | Fear not ye, |
| Mk. | and be not amazed. |
| Mt. and Mk. | Ye seek Jesus, |
| Mk. | The Nazarene, |
| Mt. and Mk. | which hath been crucified. |
| Lk. | But why seek ye the living among the dead? |
| Mt. Mk. Lk. | He is not here, but is risen, |
| Mt. | even as He said. |
| Mt. and Mk. | Behold the place where the Lord lay. |
| Lk. | Remember how He spake unto you when He was yet in Galilee, saying, that the Son of man must be delivered up unto the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again. |
| Mk. | But go tell His disciples and Peter, |
| Mt. and Mk. | he goeth before you into Galilee, there shall ye see Him, |
| Mk. | as he said unto you. |
| Mt. | Lo, I have told you. |
| Mt. and Mk. | and they went out and fled from the tomb |
| Mt. | With fear, |
| Mk. | For trembling and astonishment had come upon them; and they said nothing to any one, for they were afraid. |
| Lk. | But when they remembered Jesus' words, they returned from the tomb, |
| Mt. | and with great joy ran to bring His disciples word; |
| Lk. | and told all these things to the eleven, and to all the rest. |

Here St. John introduces into his picture one prominent figure, St. Matthew two, St. Mark three, St. Luke a company.

When St. John is placed last, these figures run two, three, a company, one. All idea of design and development disappears.

That St. Matthew's two include St. John's one, that St. Mark's three include St. Matthew's two, and that St. Luke's company includes all the three mentioned by St. John, St. Matthew, and St. Mark, is at least as manifest as it can be without the fact being stated in so many words.

Whilst mentioning the women who came with Jesus out of

Galilee, St. Luke is careful not to seem to throw doubt either upon St. John's or St. Matthew's narratives. Both Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James are specified by name as forming part of the larger company of women of which he has been speaking.

At the same time, he introduces a fresh and important witness, Joanna, elsewhere described as the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward.

Clearly, if St. Luke's intention were to extend the circle of witnesses and yet not in any way to interfere with the other narratives, he could not have accomplished his purpose more successfully than he has done.

Precisely the same result is still further obtained by his full record of Jesus' appearance to the two disciples—not Apostles—on their way to Emmaus.

St. Luke's notices, (*a*) of Peter's visit to the tomb, and (*b*) of Jesus' appearance to the assembled Apostles, both violate his usual custom of not relating any incident otherwise only mentioned by St. John. Both are explanatory and essentially supplemental notices. So far as we can see there was only one fact in connection with Peter's visit to the tomb as to which St. John's fuller narrative would, in spite of its fulness, necessarily convey a wrong impression, and, therefore, one requiring to be corrected. From his account we should have supposed that while he himself saw "the linen clothes lying" and yet feared to enter, St. Peter entered boldly and at once, and only after entering, saw what had failed to influence St. John. But St. Luke tells us that *before he entered*, St. Peter as well as St. John had stooped down and looked in, and seen "the linen clothes by themselves."

That St. Luke should mention just this one point and otherwise only so far allude to the whole episode as to make this point clear, is just one of those slight and incidental items of the evidence which so continually corroborate the more decisive evidences of the relation existing between St. Luke's and St. John's narratives.

In St. Luke's record of Jesus' appearance to the assembled Apostles the evidence is again of exactly the same character. Everything found in St. John, but not absolutely necessary to make his own additions intelligible, is wholly omitted.

That the additions of St. Luke make it clear that the appearance was not a mere apparition is obvious. Not less obvious is it that this was not only in itself an important fact to establish, but one about which it is quite possible that an erroneous impression was known to have existed before St. Luke wrote.

We must now say a few words about the notes of time marking the starting-point of the several narratives. They stand thus:—

St. John—"On the first day of the week while it was yet dark."

St. Matthew—"Late on the sabbath day, as it begun to draw on toward the first day of the week."

St. Mark—(*a*) "And when the sabbath was passed," and (*b*) "Very early on the first day of the week."

St. Luke—"At early dawn."

St. John's and St. Matthew's notes of times are wholly distinct, and refer to two entirely separate visits to the tomb, one made on the sabbath afternoon, the other made early the following morning.

To place this fact wholly beyond doubt, St. Mark tells us what the same women did between the two visits.

There does not seem to be any room for doubt as to the connection and contrast between the note of time by which St. Matthew introduces the visit of contemplation paid to the tomb, and the note of time with which St. Mark prefaces his account of the way the women spent the evening of the same day.

The visit of contemplation took place "late on the sabbath day as it began to draw on towards the first day of the week," *i.e.* six o'clock in the evening. It therefore presumably occupied the hours intervening between three or four and six o'clock on the sabbath afternoon.

In the strictest and most obvious order of progression, St. Mark tells us what happened "when the sabbath was passed." The women who at the earlier time had been to visit the tomb, at the later period, and as soon as the sabbath restrictions ceased to affect them, went and bought spices.

It is not a little remarkable that both the authors of the Authorised and the Revised Versions should render St.

Matthew's expression when used in Luke xxiii. 54, "*and the sabbath drew on*," and in Matt. xxviii. 1, "*as it began to dawn towards the first day of the week.*"

To have said in St. Luke "the sabbath—*i.e.* six o'clock in the evening—began to dawn," would have been impossible.

Why then make St. Matthew say that "it began to dawn" towards six o'clock in the evening?

The only possible result of so translating St. Matthew is to gloss over an alleged mistake on his part, and to bring about a sort of spurious and half-and-half harmony between his statement and St. Mark's *second* note of time, which really refers to an altogether different incident.

Clearly the whole difficulty arises from an assumption that in spite of the highly-condensed character of his narrative, the note of time prefixed by St. Matthew to *the first* of a series of incidents *necessarily applies to them all*, and that merely because the same actors are spoken of throughout.

To go on to the events of the early morning.

St. Mark says that the two Marys and Salome came to the tomb "very early, when the sun was risen."

To reconcile this with St. John's statement, that Mary Magdalene arrived at the tomb "while it was yet dark," we must suppose that she was the only one of the women whose eagerness and anxiety brought her from her home at an exceptionally early hour, that she was shortly joined by the other women, and that it was only when the sun was risen that, in common with them, she first perceived that the stone was rolled away.

St. Luke's "at early dawn" seems to indicate a point of time somewhat later than that mentioned by St. John and somewhat earlier than that mentioned by St. Mark. If so, it would, of course, indicate that Mary Magdalene was first joined by the women from Galilee and almost immediately afterwards by Mary the mother of James, and Salome.

It is obvious that so large a number of women coming from different quarters would not be likely to arrive altogether. Nor can anything be more natural than the manner in which they are represented as arriving—Mary coming first, the larger company of women almost immediately afterwards, and the other Mary and Salome arriving when it was very nearly

but not quite light enough to see that the stone was rolled away.

What they did in the interval between their arrival and their seeing that the stone was rolled away, St. Mark tells us —they were discussing the question how they could obtain help to deal with the stone, which from its "exceeding greatness" would manifestly be beyond their powers to remove.

We pass on to consider the angelic appearances.

St. John mentions two angels seen by Mary, and described as "sitting one at the head and one at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain."

St. Matthew mentions one angel only, viz. the Angel of the Lord, who some time during the night had rolled away the stone, and who at a subsequent period addressed the women inside the tomb.

St. Mark mentions a young man sitting on the right side of the tomb.

St. Luke mentions two men in dazzling apparel who suddenly became visible to the women after they had entered the tomb, and whilst their perplexity at not finding the body was at its height.

Having regard to the usual relation between the four narratives, there is a strong presumption that of the two angels mentioned by St. John, St. Matthew mentions one, St. Mark the other, and St. Luke both.

Nor is there anything in the Synoptic narratives to militate against this presumption. On the contrary, everything confirms it.

As usual, the Synoptic records exactly fill up the gap left by St. John's narrative, and, as usual, in all respects expand and explain each other.

St. Matthew does not state that after sitting on the stone the Angel of the Lord disappeared and subsequently reappeared inside the tomb; but he clearly implies it by saying that after he had addressed the women they "issued forth" from the tomb,—an implication which St. Mark confirms by using the same word in the same connection. Nor does the wording of the address less clearly indicate that the speaker was speaking from the actual place where the body of Jesus had lain.

St. Mark, after telling how the women had acted before entering the tomb, describes the actual entrance, and at once goes on to speak of the young man sitting at the right side of the tomb.

St. Luke, after abbreviating the explanatory matter given by St. Mark as to the entrance to the tomb, relates what happened after the women had entered AND BEFORE ANY ANGELIC APPEARANCE WAS VISIBLE. They were greatly perplexed at not finding the body as they expected. It was at the very height of their perplexity that "two men in dazzling apparel" suddenly appeared.

St. Luke does not say, as both the Authorised and Revised Versions make him say, that the two men "stood" before them. He merely says that they "appeared." As applied to visions the word has no necessary reference to posture. It is, in fact, the same word used to describe the appearance of the angel to the shepherds of Bethlehem, with whom is immediately associated a multitude of the heavenly host.

To represent St. Luke as saying that both angels were "standing," when St. Mark says that one of them was "sitting," is simply to introduce a contradiction which in the original has no existence.

We must remember that the two angels mentioned by St. John as seen by Mary Magdalene were sitting. The presumption is that the posture attributed to them by St. John was the same that they had assumed at the earlier period mentioned by the Synoptists.

That St. Luke intends to identify the two speakers separately mentioned by St. Matthew and St. Mark, is shown by his attributing to both of them an address which, though as usual it is partly abbreviated and partly expanded, is manifestly the same address as that recorded alike by St. Matthew and St. Mark.

As the result of the address, St. Matthew speaks of the women being affected by "fear and great joy."

St. Mark enlarges upon the effect of the fear, and tells how for a while it filled them with panic and rendered them speechless. St. Luke, enlarging upon the state of mind which succeeded this panic, tells how it was caused by the recollection of the words which he alone quotes, and how it led them to

do what St. Matthew says they did—run with great joy to bring His disciples word.

To conclude—

It will be admitted that the best test of the correctness of any theory as to the relation of the Gospels lies in the success with which it can be applied to any parallel records presenting exceptional difficulties.

I submit that the composite history which the application of our theory produces in the present case really leaves nothing for the hostile critic to take exception to.

Here, as in the case of Peter's denials, the method of narration adopted by the Evangelists is, indeed, intensely unusual; but here as there the formation of a composite narrative is simply a matter of the most absolutely mechanical application of rules established by innumerable precedents in every part of the Gospel history.

# CHAPTER VII

## SIXTEEN FOURFOLD STATEMENTS

THE following analyses afford perfectly normal samples of the relation in which the Gospel narratives stand to each other, and of the way in which they invariably combine to form a composite history.

Can any one seriously contend that the Synoptic portions of these narratives could by any possibility be the result of the fossilisation of the mere driftwood, so to speak, of oral tradition, or that the close connection everywhere observable between them and St. John's Gospel could be the result of accident?

To comment upon each analysis separately would only involve needless repetition.

### I

Jn. vi. 2, 3. Mt. xiv. 13, 14. Mk. vi. 33, 34. Lk. ix. 11

| | |
|---|---|
| Mt. Mk. | And the people, |
| Jn. Lk. | a great multitude, |
| Mk. | saw them going, and many knew them. |
| Lk. | And perceiving it, |
| Jn. Mt. Lk. | they followed them, |
| Jn. | because they beheld the signs which He did on them that were sick; |
| Mk. | and they ran there |
| Mt. Mk. | on foot |
| Mt. | from all |
| Mt. Mk. | the cities, |
| Mk. | and outwent them. |
| Mt. Mk. | And He came forth and saw a great multitude, |
| Lk. | and He welcomed them, |
| Mt. Mk. | and He had compassion on them, |
| Mk. | because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and He began to teach them many things, |
| Lk. | and spake to them of the kingdom of God; |
| Mt. Lk. | and He healed |
| Mt. | their sick, |
| Lk. | them that had need of healing. |

II

| Jn. vi. 4, 9. | Mt. xiv. 15–18. | Mk. vi. 35–38. | Lk. ix. 12, 13 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Jn. | Now the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was at hand, | Mt. Mk. Lk. | in a desert place, |
| Mt. | and when even was come, | Mt. | and the time is already past, |
| Mk. | and the day was now far spent, | Mk. | and the day now far spent. |
| Lk. | and began to wear away, | Mt. | But Jesus |
| Mt. Mk. | the disciples, | Mk. | answered and |
| Lk. | the twelve, | Mt. Mk. Lk. | said unto them, |
| Mt. Mk. Lk. | came unto Him. | Mt. | They have no need to go away. |
| Jn. | Jesus therefore lifting up His eyes and seeing that a great multitude cometh unto Him, saith unto Philip, Whence are we to buy bread, that these may eat? And He said this to prove him: for He Himself knew what He would do. Philip answered Him, Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one may take a little. | Mt. Mk. Lk. | Give ye them to eat. |
| | | Mk. | And they say unto Him, Shall we go and buy two hundred pennyweight of bread, and give them to eat? And He saith unto them, How many loaves have ye? Go and see. And when they knew, |
| | | Jn. | one of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, saith unto Him, There is a lad here which hath |
| | | Jn. Mt. Mk. Lk. | five |
| | | Jn. | barley |
| | | Jn. Mt. Mk. Lk. | loaves and two fishes; |
| Mt. Mk. Lk. | send the multitudes away [Mk. send them] that they may go into the villages, | Lk. | we have no more except we should go and buy food for all this people; |
| Mk. Lk. | and into the country | | |
| Lk. | round about, and lodge, | | |
| Mt. Mk. Lk. | and buy themselves food [Mk. something to eat, Lk. get victuals]. | Jn. | but what are these amongst so many? |
| Lk. | For we are here | Mt. | And He said, Bring them hither unto me. |

III

| Jn. vi. 10. | Mt. xiv. 19. | Mk. 39, 40. | Lk. ix. 14, 15 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Jn. | Jesus | Jn. | Now there was much grass in the place. |
| Jn. Lk. | said | | |
| Lk. | unto His disciples, | Mt. | [Thus, by means of the disciples, Jesus] commanded the multitudes to sit down |
| Jn. Lk. | Make the people [Lk. them] sit down | | |
| Lk. | in companies about fifty each; | Mk. | by companies on the green |
| Jn. | and they did so, and made them all sit down. | Mt. Mk. | grass. |

IV

| Jn. vi. 10. | Mt. xiv. 20. | Mk. vi. 40, 44. | Lk. ix. 13 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Jn. Mk. | So the men [Mk. they] sat down | Jn. Mt. Lk. | about |
| Mk. | in ranks by hundreds and fifties. | Jn. Mt. Mk. Lk. | five thousand |
| Mt. Mk. | And they that had eaten | Mt. Mk. Lk. | men, |
| Mk. | the loaves | Mt. | besides women and children. |
| Jn. | [were] in number | | |

V

| Jn. vi. 11. | Mt. xiv. 19. | Mk. vi. 41. | Lk. ix. 15 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Jn. | | Jesus therefore | |
| Jn. Mt. Mk. Lk. | | took | |
| Mt. Mk. Lk. | | the five | |
| Jn. Mt. Mk. Lk. | | loaves | |
| Mt. Mk. Lk. | | and the two fishes, | |
| Mt. Mk. Lk. | | and, looking up to heaven, He blessed them, | |
| Mk. Lk. | | and brake | |
| Mk. | | the loaves. | |
| Jn. | | And having given thanks, He distributed to them that were set down | |
| Mt. Mk. Lk. | | | [not personally, but] He gave |
| Mt. | | | the loaves |
| Mt. Mk. Lk. | | | to the disciples |
| Mk. Lk. | | | to set before the multitude [Mk. them]; |
| Mt. | | | and the disciples gave to the multitude. |
| Jn. | | | Likewise also of |
| Mk. | | | the two |
| Jn. Mk. | | | fishes, |
| Jn. | | | as much as they would |
| Mk. | | | divided He among them all. |

VI

| Jn. vi. 12, 13. | Mt. xiv. 20. | Mk. vi. 42, 43. | Lk. ix. 17 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Mt. Mk. | | And all | |
| Mt. Mk. Lk. | | did eat, | |
| Lk. | | and all | |
| Mt. Mk. Lk. | | were filled. | |
| Jn. | | He saith unto His disciples, Gather up the broken pieces which remain over, that nothing be lost. So they gathered them up, | |
| Mt. Mk. Lk. | | and they took up | |
| Mt. Lk. | | that which remained over | |
| Lk. | | | to them |
| Mt. Mk. Lk. | | | of the broken pieces. |
| Jn. | | | And they filled |
| Jn. Mt. Mk. Lk. | | | twelve baskets |
| Mt. Mk. | | | full |
| Jn. | | | with broken pieces from the five barley loaves which remained over unto them that had eaten, |
| Mk. | | | and also of the fishes. |

VII

| Jn. xii. 14, 15. | Mt. xxi. 1–6. | Mk. xi. 1–6. | Lk. xix. 21–34 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Jn. | | And Jesus, having found a young colt, sat thereon. [And He found it in this wise.] | |
| Lk. | | It came to pass | |
| Mt. Mk. Lk. | | when they drew nigh | |
| Mt. Mk. | | unto Jerusalem, | |
| Mt. | | and came | |
| Mt. Mk. Lk. | | unto Bethphage | |
| Mk. Lk. | | and Bethany, | |
| Lk. | | at the mount that is called | |
| Mt. Mk. Lk. | | the mount of Olives; then Jesus sent two disciples, saying | |
| Mt. Mk. | | unto them, | |
| Mt. Mk. Lk. | | Go your way into the village that is over against you. | |
| Mk. Lk. | | In the which as ye enter into it, | |
| Mt. Mk. | | straightway | |
| Mt. Mk. Lk. | | ye shall find | |
| Mt. | | an ass tied, and | |
| Mt. Mk. Lk. | | | a colt |
| Mk. Lk. | | | whereon no man ever yet sat tied |
| Mt. | | | with her. |
| Mt. Mk. Lk. | | | Loose |
| Mt. | | | them [Mk. Lk. him] |
| Mt. Mk. Lk. | | | and bring |
| Mt. | | | them unto me [Mk. Lk. bring him]. |
| Mt. Mk. Lk. | | | And if any one |
| Mt. | | | say ought unto you, |
| Mk. Lk. | | | [and] ask you, Why do ye loose him? [Mk. say unto you, Why do ye this?] |
| Mt. Mk. Lk. | | | Ye shall say the Lord hath need |
| Mt. | | | of them [Mk. Lk. of him], |
| Mt. Mk. | | | and straightway he will send them [Mk. him] |
| Mk. | | | back hither. |
| Mt. | | | And the disciples |
| Lk. | | | that were sent |
| Mk. Lk. | | | went away, and found |

Mk. a colt tied at the door without, in the open street,
Lk. even as He had said unto them.
Mt. And they did even as Jesus appointed them,
Mk. and they loose him.
Lk. And as they were loosing the colt,
Mk. certain of them that stood there said unto them, What do ye loosing the colt?
Lk. and the owner thereof said unto them, Why loose ye the colt?
Mk. Lk. And they said unto them
Mk. even as Jesus had said,
Lk. The Lord hath need of him,
Mk. And they let them go.
Mt. Mk. Lk. And they brought
Mt. the ass and
Mt. Mk. Lk. the colt
Mk. Lk. unto Jesus,
Mt. Mk. Lk. and put on them their garments [Mk. on him; Lk. upon the colt],
Jn. Mt. Mk. And He sat thereon [Lk. they set Jesus thereon].
Mk. Now this is come to pass that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet,
Mt. as it is written,
Mk. saying,
Mt. Fear not, daughter of Zion [Mk. Tell ye the daughter of Zion],
Mt. Mk. Behold thy King cometh
Mk. unto thee, meek and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass [Mt. sitting upon an ass's colt].

VIII

Jn. xviii. 1, 2. Mt. xxvi. 30, 36. Mk. xiv. 26, 32. Lk. xxii. 39, 40

Jn. Mt. } Mk. Lk. } And He came out
Lk. and went as He was wont
Jn. with His disciples over the brook Kedron
Mt. Mk. Lk. unto the mount of Olives,
Lk. and His disciples also followed Him.
Mt. Mk. Then cometh Jesus unto a place
Jn. where was a garden
Mt. Mk. named Gethsemane,
Jn. into which He entered, Himself and His disciples. And Judas also, which betrayed Him, knew the place; for Jesus oft-times resorted thither with His disciples.

IX

Jn. xviii. 3. Mt. xxvi. 47. Mk. xiv. 43. Lk. xxii. 47

Jn. Mt. Mk. Judas then,
Mt. Mk. one of the twelve,
Jn. having received the band of soldiers and officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees,
Jn. Mt. Mk. cometh thither
Jn. with lanterns, and torches, and weapons,
Mt. Mk. and with him
Mt. a great
Mt. Mk. multitude, with swords and staves, from the chief priests,
Mk. and the scribes,
Mt. Mk. and the elders
Mk. of the people.
[Lk. Behold, a multitude, and he that was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them.]

X

Jn. xviii. 5. Mt. xxvi. 48–50. Mk. xiv. 44–46. Lk. xxii. 47, 48

Jn. And Judas also,
Jn. Mt. Mk. which betrayed Him,
Jn. was standing with them,
Mt. Mk. and had given them a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that is He, take Him,
Mk. and lead Him away safely.
Mt. Mk. And straightway he came
Lk. and drew near unto Jesus to kiss Him.
Mt. Mk. And he said, Hail Rabbi! and kissed Him.
Lk. But Jesus said unto him, Judas, betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss?

XI

Jn. xviii. 10, 11. Mt. xxvi. 51–56. Mk. xiv. 47–52. Lk. xxii. 49–53

Lk. And when they that were about Him saw what would follow, they said, Lord, shall we smite with the sword?
Mt. Mk. Lk. And behold one of them
Mt. that were with Jesus,
Mk. and stood by,
Jn. Simon Peter, having
Jn. Mt. Mk. a sword,
Mt. stretched out his hand and drew it,
Jn. Mt. } and struck the high
Mk. Lk. } priest's servant, and cut off his
Jn. right
Jn. Mt. } ear.
Mk. Lk. }
Jn. And the servant's name was Malchus.
Lk. But Jesus answered and said, Suffer ye thus far; and touched his ear, and healed him.
Jn. Mt. Jesus therefore said unto Peter, Put up the sword
Mt. again
Jn. Mt. into the sheath [Mt. its place]:
Mk. for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.
Jn. The cup which the Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?
Mt. Or thinkest thou that I cannot beseech my Father, and He shall even now send me more than twelve legions of angels? How then should the Scriptures be fulfilled that thus it must be?
Mt. In that hour
Mt. Mk. Lk. Jesus
Mk. answered
Mt. Mk. Lk. and said
Mt. to the multitudes
Lk. [and] to the chief priests and captains of the temple, and elders, which were come against Him,
Mt. Mk. Lk. Are ye come out as against a robber, with swords and staves
Mt. Mk. to seize me?
Lk. when
Mk. Lk. I was
Mt. Mk. Lk. daily in the temple
Lk. with you,
Mt. [and] sat teaching,
Mt. Mk. ye took me not,
Lk. neither stretched ye forth your hands against me; but this is your hour, and the power of darkness.
Mt. Mk. But all this is come to pass that the Scriptures [Mk. this is done]
Mt. of the prophets
Mt. Mk. might be fulfilled.
Mt. Mk. Then all the disciples left Him and fled [Mk. they all].
Mk. And a certain young man followed with Him, having a linen cloth cast about him over his naked body; and they laid hold of him, but he left the linen cloth, and fled naked.

XII

Jn. xviii. 28. Mt. xxvii. 1, 2. Mk. xv. 1. Lk. xxii. 66–71

Mt. Mk. Now when morning was come [Mk. straightway in the morning],
Lk. as soon as it was day, the assembly of the elders of the people was gathered together, both chief priests and scribes, and they led Him away into their council;
Mt. [and] all
Mt. Mk. the chief priests and elders of the people,
Mk. and the scribes, and the whole council,
Mt. Mk. took counsel
Mt. against Jesus to put Him to death,
Lk. saying, If Thou art the Christ, tell us. But He said unto them, If I tell you, ye will not believe; and if I ask you, ye will not answer. But from henceforth shall the Son of Man be seated at the

right hand of the power of God. And they all said, Art Thou then the Son of God? And He said unto them, Ye say that I am. And they said, What further need have we of witness? for we ourselves have heard from His own mouth. And the whole company of them rose up,

Mt. Mk. and they bound Him, and led Him away

Jn. from Caiaphas into the palace,

Mt. Mk. Lk. and delivered Him up to [Lk. brought Him before] Pilate

Mt. the governor.

Jn. And it was early; and they themselves entered not into the palace, that they might not be defiled, but might eat the Passover.

XIII

Jn. xviii. 33–37. Mt. xxvii. 11. Mk. xv. 3. Lk. xxiii. 2, 3

Jn. Pilate therefore entered again into the palace, and called Jesus.

Mt. And Jesus stood before the governor;

Mt. Mk. Lk. and the governor asked Him,

Jn. Mt. Mk. Lk. saying, Art Thou the King of the Jews?

Jn. Jesus answered, Sayest thou this of thyself, or did others tell it concerning me? Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priest delivered Thee unto me: what hast Thou done? Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now is my kingdom not from hence. Pilate therefore said unto Him, Art Thou a king then?

Jn. Mt. Mk. Lk. Jesus answered, Thou sayest

Jn. that I am a King. To this end have I been born, and to this end am I come into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.

XIV

Jn. xix. 17. Mt. xxvii. 32. Mk. xv. 21. Lk. xxiii. 26

Jn. And He went out, bearing the cross for Himself.

Lk. And when they led Him away,

Mt. as they came out they found a man

Mt. Mk. Lk. of Cyrene, Simon

Mt. by name,

Mk. passing by,

Mk. Lk. coming from the country,

Mk. the father of Alexander and Rufus;

Lk. and they laid hold on him,

Mt. Mk. and compelled him to go with them.

Lk. And they laid on him the cross,

Mt. Mk. Lk. that he might bear it

Lk. after Jesus.

XV

Jn. xix. 23, 24. Mt. xxvii. 33–36. Mk. xv. 22–26. Lk. xxiii. 34, 35

The present is only one of many instances of the Synoptists giving a summary in almost identical language of an incident fully recorded by St. John.

The evidential value of these instances cannot be exaggerated.

The Synoptists do in these cases, on a small scale, just what they do on a larger scale with regard to the history as a whole. They all agree in adopting a method of narration which, apart from the hypothesis of their presupposing the existence of St. John's Gospel, would be wholly inexplicable.

In this, as in other instances, the cause of the action is found only in St. John; the action itself only in the Synoptists.

| | |
|---|---|
| Jn. | The soldiers therefore, when they had crucified Jesus [Mt. And when they had crucified Him; Mk. And they crucify Him; Lk. There they crucified Him], took His garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also the coat. Now the coat was without seam, |
| | woven from the top throughout. They said therefore one to another, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be. |
| Mt. Mk. Lk. | And they parted His garments among them, casting lots |
| Mk. | upon them what each should take. |

XVI

Jn. xix. 30. Mt. xxvii. 50. Mk. xv. 37. Lk. xxiii. 46

| | |
|---|---|
| Jn. | When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, |
| Mt. Mk. Lk. | He cried again with a loud voice, |
| Jn. | and said, It is finished. And He bowed His head |
| Lk. | and said, Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit; and having said this, |
| Jn. Mt. Mk. Lk. | He gave up His spirit. |

## CHAPTER VIII

### HOW THE GOSPELS WERE PRODUCED

The first condition of all original investigation is, that the student shall approach his subject with his mind wholly unbiassed by any assumptions. No matter how apparently true, nor how long and universally accepted his previously conceived opinions may be, they must all be placed, so to speak, in the dock and tried on the capital charge of misdirection.

But when, having once arrived at his own conclusions, the student desires to expound them to others, he can hardly do otherwise than reverse the process by which he has himself proceeded. Instead of working from evidence to conclusions, he must state his conclusions, show how they combine into a harmonious whole, and finally show how the evidence supports them.

Apart from such a process as this, it may well happen that even the most perfect series of scientific inductions, especially when opposed to more or less universally accepted opinions, may appear hopelessly disconnected and incredible.

Acting on this principle, I shall endeavour in the present chapter to state the general drift of the conclusions already explained, and to show how they combine to form a history of Gospel production which is not only eminently simple and natural, but in the case of two of the writers, St. John and St. Luke, strictly consistent with their own avowed object in writing.

### ST. JOHN'S GOSPEL

St. John was indisputably the one Apostle best qualified to be the first Evangelist. He had enjoyed our Lord's con-

fidence and affection to an extent which in itself must have given him a perfectly unique position in the Apostolic body. More than this, at the very last Jesus had conferred upon him an honour which, involving as it did the residence of Jesus' mother in his house, would for some years at least be a standing memorial, alike to the Apostles, to the outer circle of disciples, and to the Jewish rulers and public, of the preference which his Master had shown to him, and the consequent priority which such preference necessarily implied.

Thus of those possessed of the primary qualifications for writing a Gospel, St. John would stand out *facile princeps*.

Hence, so far from requiring any explanation of St. John being the first Evangelist, rather, if he were not the first, we might fairly ask for a reason how it came to pass that any other of the Apostles was preferred before him.

Let us try for a moment to conceive under what circumstances St. John may have undertaken to write his Gospel.

The only trustworthy guide which we have to help us to such a conception is what is termed the Muratorian Fragment or Canon,—a document which cannot be later than the end of the second century, which may be much earlier, and which has all the appearance of representing a tradition which had already become time-honoured.

It runs thus—

"At the entreaty of his fellow-disciples and overseers, John said, 'Fast with me for three days from this time, and whatever shall be revealed to each of us, *i.e.* whether it be favourable to my writing or not, let us relate it to one another.' On the same night it was revealed to Andrew, one of the Apostles, that John should relate all things in his own name, aided by the revision of all."

The circumstances which the Fragment suggests are these—

1. No previous record was in existence.

2. St. John was recognised as the one Apostle of all others qualified to supply best the required record.

3. The original idea of the Apostolic body pointed to a single document dealing with the whole history so far as it then required to be written.

4. The feeling which operated with the Apostolic body was that whatever St. John might write would be written by him

as the representative of the other disciples, and that they, by their final recension of his work, would officially stamp it with this representative character.

How much or how little of the graphic picture which the above quotation calls up before our minds is true, we have no means of judging. But one thing we do know—

If the first idea of the Apostolic body was—and this seems highly probable—that St. John should be the sole and representative historian of our Lord's life and ministry, he himself, under whatever influence, saw fit to abandon this idea and to place very distinct limits to his work.

The more we realise how much turns upon this avowed limitation of his subject by St. John, the more we shall realise the importance of giving their fullest significance to the two following statements—

1. John xx. 30, 31: "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples which are not written in this book. But these are written *that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God: and that believing, ye might have life through His name.*"

2. John xxi. 25: "And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every-one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books which should be written."

But the very observance of the limits thus indicated necessarily compelled St. John to deal exclusively with the most manifestly important side or aspect of the subject, and that not only with regard to the history as a whole, but with regard to all the more important crises of the history.

Hence, however many writers might follow St. John, the area of narration open to them was clearly and sharply defined. No matter what part of the history St. John had already dealt with, in that part they would necessarily find themselves forestalled with regard to the very facts and details which any independent historian would naturally most desire to place on record.

According to the limitations which St. John imposed upon himself, he proposed to relate (not "all the things" as stated in the above "Fragment," but) only such facts as he considered of primary importance in their bearing—(*a*) on the Divinity

and Messiahship of Jesus, and (*b*) on the basis of saving faith which he wished his Gospel to afford.

St. John plainly recognised that a purely historical view of our Lord's life would afford a vast and practically unlimited scope to any possible writers of the future. But his language seems to raise a strong presumption that he knew of no document or documents, whether with or without authority, which had already dealt with that aspect of the subject. Nor would it seem that he himself, at the time of writing, anticipated that any further record, however interesting it might be, would really be necessary—at least for the purposes which he had himself in view.

It is quite clear that the facts best calculated to support St. John's thesis, *i.e.* to prove the Divinity of our Lord and to provide an adequate basis of faith, would all be facts of primary and fundamental importance. Hence we are not surprised that he everywhere gives, not only what are confessedly the most important facts of the history as a whole, but the most important details of those events with which he deals in common with his co-historians.

Hence, of course, the problem—

Since the facts and details recorded by St. John were of such manifestly fundamental importance, how is it possible to conceive that, if St. John wrote last, they should all have been so systematically omitted, not by St. Matthew only, but by St. Mark and St. Luke also.

But apart from the supreme importance of the facts and details of facts which St. John alone relates, in three particulars especially his Gospel seems to possess the characteristics which we should expect to belong to a first Gospel.

1. Large as St. John's omissions are, these omissions are duly accounted for. Hence, whilst its avowed incompleteness has a manifest tendency to whet curiosity, if we may so speak, it has no tendency whatever to create any false impression as to the general bearings of the history.

Surely we may regard it as indisputable that the first published Gospel must have been calculated to stand alone as a wholly self-contained document.

The above peculiarity of St. John's Gospel makes it fulfil this condition.

On the other hand, no one will affirm that the same claim can be made for either of the other Gospels. Apart from St. John, they are not only incomplete, but their unexplained incompleteness cannot but be singularly misleading, and render them proportionally unsuited to stand alone.

*Thus, while the obligations of intelligent criticism compel us to select one of the Gospels as the first published, St. John's is indisputably the only one which fulfils the primary condition of priority, on the fulfilment of which common sense naturally insists.*

2. "Beginning at Jerusalem" was the motto and watchword of the administrative policy of the Apostles. A first Gospel which, without assigned or apparent reason, made the very author of this motto himself conspicuously ignore it, would be so untrue, alike to fact and to sentiment, as to be an almost inconceivable anomaly.

That the Gospel, as represented by St. John, was inaugurated at Jerusalem, and that it was grafted on to the law at the chief Jewish festivals, are facts conspicuously in keeping with all our Lord's teaching.

Hence, by dealing almost exclusively with the Jerusalem ministry and with the teaching of the Jewish festivals, St. John seems to affix the seal of priority to his own record, as much as the other Evangelists, by omitting just these primary aspects of their subject, affix to their records the seal of posteriority to that of St. John.

3. That a first Gospel should meet certain obvious requirements of the early Church appears to be a necessity of the case.

For instance, the very manner in which at the last the Apostles had fled before the dangers which had confronted them, must have made it a matter of peculiar importance that some record should be available, not only of the way in which their conduct had been foreseen by Christ, but of the fact that in spite of this foreseen desertion they had, nevertheless, so won His confidence as to have been formally appointed His future representatives.

Again, in His more public teaching Jesus had scarcely spoken of the gift and operation of the Holy Spirit. Unless, therefore, the Apostles were to lie open to the charge of super-

adding cunningly devised fables of their own to the teaching of their Master, it must clearly have been of the utmost importance that our Lord's teaching on this point should once for all and, as soon as possible, be placed on record.

So with regard to the cycle of appearances by which the reality of the Resurrection was attested, save for one or two very partial repetitions by St. Mark and St. Luke, these are given only by St. John.

In which Gospel, we may ask, was it so natural and necessary that these should appear as in the first?

What wonder, then, that all the evidence should point to St. John's Gospel as the original and foundation title-deed of the Church and the Christian faith?

## ST. MATTHEW'S GOSPEL

The evidence does, I believe, prove that St. Matthew wrote his Gospel next after and with special reference to the Gospel of St. John.

We have seen that the avowedly limited scope of St. John's Gospel necessarily involved his dealing both historically and doctrinally with only a limited portion—practically with *one side only*—of our Lord's life and ministry.

Thus the very character of St. John's Gospel would of itself suggest a further record, dealing with at least the more important of the facts which represented *the other side of the subject*, and especially with our Lord's oral teaching on matters of a less distinctly spiritual character.

But both the facts and the teaching recorded by St. John were to a very large extent of a wholly private character, *i.e.* known only to the disciples. *Hence one overwhelmingly strong reason for their being placed on record as soon as possible.*

A moment's consideration will show that no special motive for the earliest possible publication existed with regard to the subjects of St. Matthew's Gospel.

Hence it would be quite natural that for some time, possibly for some six or eight years or even longer, St. John's Gospel should have been held to meet all the actual necessities of the case.

As, however, time passed, and the teaching of the infant

Church needed more and more to embrace the general outline of the whole of our Lord's ministry, the need for a supplemental Gospel, if only for public reading at Christian assemblies, could hardly fail to be keenly felt.

That both the subject-matter and the structure of this second Apostolic record should be systematically regulated by and adapted to the first, is precisely what we should have expected.

That it is so regulated and adapted, and that together the two records constitute a complete and exquisitely-balanced twofold primary representation of Gospel facts and teaching, is found to be a fact capable of the most certain demonstration.

It is obvious that supposing St. Matthew's Gospel to have been thus adapted to a previously existing record, it must of necessity have been conspicuously one-sided.

As no other reasonable explanation of this conspicuous and universally recognised "one-sidedness" of St. Matthew's record has ever been suggested, there seems to be an overwhelmingly strong presumption that the only cause apparently adequate to produce such a result, viz. the previous existence of St. John's Gospel, must have been the real cause.

An objector may urge, "We grant that either St. Matthew's Gospel must have been supplemental to St. John's, or St. John's supplemental to St. Matthew's; but as the latter is the commonly received opinion, why should we reject it?"

I answer that, apart from internal evidence, one proposition is undoubtedly just as tenable as the other. All I maintain is, that everywhere, in the history as a whole, in the parallel sections, in the parallel incidents, and even in the parallel verses, all the evidence without any exception points as conclusively as it does uniformly to the priority, not of St. Matthew's, but of St. John's record.

One point to which I would here specially draw the reader's attention is this:—Save for a limited number of conspicuous repetitions, the Gospels of St. John and St. Matthew are wholly independent and original documents.

It is true that many incidents recorded by St. John are reintroduced by St. Matthew; but such reintroductions involve so exceedingly small an amount of actual verbal identity between the narratives as to be wholly insufficient to detract

appreciably from the originality—we will not say of St. Matthew, but—of whichever record was written first.

That such originality serves to give to the Apostolic Gospels the greater weight always attaching to wholly original and independent evidence, is simply a fact which cannot be disputed.

That originality should be a special characteristic of the Apostolic text of St. John and St. Matthew, is at least as consonant with probability and the fitness of things as that the non-Apostolic text of St. Mark and St. Luke should have the derived authority of being conspicuously grafted on to an Apostolic record.

One very conspicuous feature of St. Matthew's Gospel has a manifestly important bearing upon its probable date.

St. Matthew everywhere writes for persons who were fully cognisant of the general course of the events which he relates.

For instance, his historical summaries, especially when compared with his statement about Jesus dwelling at Capernaum, would have been wholly unintelligible to persons altogether unacquainted with the general bearing of the facts.

So with regard to his literary grouping of incidents throughout the whole of the Galilæan ministry, *i.e.* up to the time of the Feeding of the Five Thousand.

Or to take a single matter of detail by way of illustration.

In giving an account of the trial before Pilate, St. Matthew in the middle of his record, says: "Therefore when they were gathered together" (xxvii. 17), but he says nothing about the previous assembly having been broken up; and it is only St. Luke, writing for extra-Judæan readers, who sees the necessity for mentioning what would have been so well known to St. Matthew's readers, viz. the intermediate trial before Herod, and the consequent adjournment for a time of the trial before Pilate.

That as St. John's narrative fixes attention upon Jerusalem and the teaching at the Jewish festivals, so St. Matthew's fixes attention upon Capernaum and the Galilæan teaching, is, of course, obvious to the most careless reader.

A more striking or a more consistently maintained division

of the history between the two writers could not well be imagined.

### ST. MARK'S GOSPEL

With the exception of a few verses, St. Mark's Gospel does, as a matter of unquestionable fact, consist entirely of reintroduced portions of St. Matthew's record.

It is, I submit, of the utmost conceivable importance that this exceptionally remarkable fact should be kept constantly and prominently before the mind of the student.

The evidence shows that these reintroduced portions systematically exhibit the following peculiarities—

(*a*) To a certain uniform but limited extent they are related in the very words of St. Matthew's record.

(*b*) They are systematically abridged in matters personal to our Lord Himself, and as systematically expanded in matters personal to subordinate actors, and in matters of circumstantial and historical, and what may be termed ministerial, detail.

(*c*) In one exceptionally long section the order of chronological arrangement differs from, whilst in all the others it agrees with, that of St. Matthew.

Thus we have only to assume, as we are bound to assume, that St. Mark intended to do just what he has done, and we have a perfectly simple and intelligible reason for his Gospel being just what it is and nothing else.

An objector may urge, "If you mean to imply that the fact of St. Matthew having manifestly arranged a certain large and important group of incidents unchronologically was the main reason for St. Mark reintroducing and rearranging these incidents, why should not St. Mark have been contented to deal only with those incidents which St. Matthew placed out of order, and which therefore required rearranging?

I answer—

1. That rearrangement was not the only or even the main object of St. Mark's Gospel; and

2. That the arrangement of St. Matthew's record being partially chronological and partially unchronological, *it was just as necessary for St. Mark to show where St. Matthew has, as where he had not, adopted a chronological sequence.*

That, as is very generally thought, St. Mark's Gospel may have been primarily intended for foreign, and especially Roman, settlers in Palestine, seems at least highly probable. The ordinary residents in the country would at least have had such general knowledge of the main outline of our Lord's ministry as would prevent their misunderstanding either St. Matthew's arrangement of incidents or the periods included in his brief summaries of events.

Not so new-comers into the country. For them St. Mark's history would be in all its salient features just such an explanatory supplement to St. Matthew's record as their previous want of knowledge of its whole subject would require.

A current tradition preserved in an old manuscript of the Gospels gives the time of St. Mark's writing as ten years after the Ascension, and two years after the publication of St. Matthew's Gospel. Some such date as this would seem to be perfectly consistent both with the facts already stated and with the general probabilities of the case.

That St. Mark's Gospel may have been published simultaneously with that of St. Matthew is, of course, possible. The mere fact, which is indisputable, that it does constitute a supplemental and explanatory appendix to St. Matthew's history, implies that it was intended to serve this purpose; in which case there would be nothing improbable in its being issued at the same time.

## ST. LUKE'S GOSPEL

St. Luke's Preface must necessarily be regarded as the designed key to his Gospel.

But it contains several expressions, as to the exact meaning of which we have no certain information.

There can be only one way out of the difficulty in which this want of information necessarily involves us.

The Preface is simply a promise of which the Gospel which it introduces is the performance.

Hence, in order to ascertain what St. Luke promised to do, we have only to ascertain what he has done.

Briefly stated, what St. Luke has done is this—

1. He gives an order of events which shows that St.

Mark's arrangement of these events was, and S. Matthew's arrangement of them was not, designed to be chronological.

2. In a particular portion of the history where, save by a brief summary, neither St. Matthew nor St. Mark give the historical side of St. John's narrative, he supplies that side.

3. He everywhere gives supplementary information which tends to explain the narratives of St. John, St. Matthew, and St. Mark.

Read in the light of what he has thus done, a very slightly paraphrased translation of St. Luke's Preface would run as follows—

"Forasmuch as many have attempted to construct a harmony or fresh composite history concerning those things which took place in our midst, even as they who from the beginning were eye-witnesses and ministers of the Gospel recorded them in the official documents which they handed over to us, it seemed good to me also, having traced the course of all things accurately from the first, to write unto thee in chronological sequence, most excellent Theophilus, that thou mightest have additional assurance of the trustworthiness of the Gospels in which thou hast been instructed."

In order to verify this translation, what we have to do is to show—

1. The circumstances which correspond with and explain the cause to which St. Luke attributed his writing.

2. The connection which existed between those circumstances and the particular manner (chronological order) in which he promises to write; and

3. The extent to which his own method of writing serves to re-establish the *asplaleia* or trustworthiness of the other three Gospels.

(1 and 2.) Supposing that the evidence should altogether substantiate the accuracy of the account already given of the relation in which St. John's, St. Matthew's, and St. Mark's Gospels stand to each other, we have dealt sufficiently for our present purpose with the first two of these points. St. John and St. Matthew had provided what Tertullian speaks of as "the genuine text of the Apostolic Scriptures";

whilst St. Mark had produced a supplemental and explanatory edition of portions of St. Matthew's text.

At first, and especially when read by persons who were brought into more or less direct contact with their authors, these three records were sufficiently intelligible as they stood.

But as time went on they had to be used by persons for whom they were not primarily written, who had no such special help for understanding their peculiarities, and who had not even the general knowledge of the outline of our Lord's history which residents in Palestine might fairly be assumed to possess. In their case, the exceptional character and mutual relation of the records would not unnaturally create the particular difficulties and misconceptions, especially with regard to the chronological order of events, which St. Luke avows his intention of removing.

(3.) It remains to deal with the third point—the extent to which St. Luke's record does serve to establish the trustworthiness of the other Gospels.

It may be admitted, and indeed it is an integral part of our case, that at first sight St. Luke's chronological arrangement of events does not agree with what we have given as the promise of his Preface. On the contrary, in this matter of chronological sequence, St. Luke seems to differ from St. Mark almost as much as St. Mark often differs from St. Matthew. Thus, instead of elucidating the other records in this respect, St. Luke only makes them the more difficult to understand. Instead of there being two Gospels exhibiting striking differences in the matter of historical order, when we have added St. Luke's there are three.

Thus, as the result of adding St. Luke's Gospel, instead of elucidation, we have only confusion worse confounded.

Obviously, then, we must either abandon our interpretation of St. Luke's Preface as contrary to the facts of the case, or else explain this apparent inconsistency between what St. Luke promises to do and what apparently he has done.

Here again we have to go to our evidence. Happily this is singularly decisive.

As already explained, two main central portions of St. Luke's Gospel stand historically transposed.

As a consequence of this fact, we may adopt either of two alternatives.

We may accept the proof of designed or accidental displacement, and place these portions on their revised order;

Or, as the latter portion consists almost exclusively of subject-matter peculiar to St. Luke, we may exclude this portion from view, and so not allow it to interfere with the relation in which, apart from it, St. Luke's Gospel invariably stands to the other three Gospels.

Whichever course we prefer, the result will be the same.

We shall find—

(*a*) That in the matter of chronological sequence, the agreement between St. Luke and St. Mark is perfect; and

(*b*) That the manner in which St. Luke fills in the successive gaps in St. John's record is so clear that he who runs may read.

We thus at once show that what St. Luke promised in his Preface he did in his Gospel, and what he did in his Gospel he promised in his Preface.

With the light thus thrown upon the whole subject we can have little difficulty in expanding St. Luke's own statements into a perfectly simple and natural account of the origin of his Gospel.

It stands thus—

Either separately or on some special occasion, the three first written Gospels had been formally and officially handed over to the Church. They thus represented, and in fact constituted, "the faith once for all delivered or handed over to the saints." Parenthetically we observe that the expression "delivered or handed over" is the very expression used by St. Luke in his Preface. It is also the same word which is applied to the formal delivery of his own and St. John's Gospel in the passage attributed to St. Matthew in the *Apostolic Constitutions*.

Under such circumstances it would naturally happen that these Gospels would at once have become the main subject of the catechetical instruction of all those of whom Theophilus may be taken as a type.

So long as the first three Gospels were used chiefly by the "Churches of Judæa," and were explained by catechists who

had themselves been in constant intercourse with their writers, there was no room for any misunderstanding as to the obviously unusual character of the Evangelists' methods of dealing with their subject. But as time went on, and these Gospels were not only used in places remote from the actual scenes of the history, but by catechists and others who had no special knowledge to guide them, there would naturally arise a widely prevailing desire to combine the three authorised histories into a single composite whole.

With this object in view, "many" (Luke i. 1) appear to have attempted, in the case of these three Gospels, just what for eighteen hundred years men have always been attempting in the case of all four of them, *i.e.* to make out of them a harmony—as St. Luke calls it an "anatax," or single composite history.

In doing this, some would naturally have given preference to the arrangement of St. Matthew, some to that of St. Mark, whilst many would differ as to the exact manner in which they made these histories fit into that of St. John.

Hence all three Gospels were to some extent discredited, and, at least in the important matter of historical accuracy, their perfect trustworthiness called in question.

To remedy this was, according to his Preface, the primary object of St. Luke's Gospel.

### THE COMPLETED RECORD

Let us suppose that of two historians, one has written a history of England from a religious, the other from a political point of view, and that in dealing with certain matters common to both aspects of their subject, each writer has, as far as possible, treated them from the point of view which his own history specially required.

*The two histories would not be one whit more distinct than the histories bearing the names of St. John and St. Matthew.*

The suggestion that such historians, writing as above, had written as they did by accident, or that either of them showed ignorance by systematically ignoring what it was not his province to relate, would be about the most grotesquely foolish idea which could well be imagined.

On what principle can we possibly say that it is not equally foolish either to make the same assertion with regard to St. John and St. Matthew, or to assert that what they undoubtedly have done they did not do intentionally?

But if we once recognise this relation between the Gospels of St. John and St. Matthew, we have a basis of fact to go upon which makes the relation of all four Gospels perfectly simple.

St. John gives one side of the history, St. Matthew gives the other; but the second side being less completely treated than the first, naturally became the subject of further complementary records.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE "CLAIMANT" GOSPEL

THE Gospel according to Synopticism and the Gospel inherited by the Church stand to each other in much the same relation as the notorious "claimant" stood to the rightful owner of the Tichborne name and estate.

To what extent and under what supposed necessity the Church of this latter part of the nineteenth century has already admitted this claim we need not stop to inquire.

That she has so far admitted it as to place her in the wrong with the whole scientific world, and that this admission has done more to undermine the faith, and to supply its adversaries with their most deadly weapons, than all other causes put together, few persons will be found to deny.

Clearly the burden of proof—of making good its case in every respect—rested with the claimant Gospel.

Such proof its supporters have hitherto entirely failed to produce. They have neither shown on what grounds the title of the inherited Gospel can be called in question, nor have they made the slightest approach to proving any superior claim on the part of its modern rival.

An American writer thus defines the difference between the old and the new candidate for our suffrages.

Of the documents which represent the Church's inheritance he says:—

"They were composed by the four authors whose names they bear, who derived their information, two of them immediately and two of them mediately, from personal intercourse with Jesus Christ during His ministry on earth."

Of the documents which represent the claimant Gospel he says—

"The four Gospels had an ecclesiastical origin. They sprang from oral teachings concerning Christ which were current among the first Christian brotherhood, and were gradually collected and combined by persons who are unknown."

He then proceeds to state the following objections to this latter and later view:—

1. It was not the view adopted by the Ancient Church, which was nearest in time to the composition of the Gospels. That Ancient Church, with an unanimity even greater, perhaps, than upon any of the purely dogmatic questions that arose among them, believed that the Gospels had an *Apostolical* origin, not an ecclesiastical. Eusebius first collected the evidence of this fact, and it has been variously collected and restated since then. The Apostolic Fathers knew nothing of a canonical and commonly accepted life of Christ composed of materials gathered from oral legends current in the early Church. The apocryphal Gospels, which were constructed in this way, they carefully distinguished from the canonical, and rejected as not authoritative for the Church. Neither do the sceptical and heretical writers of the first four centuries take any different view of the origin of the Gospels. They ascribe them to the four Evangelists. The efforts made to invalidate this united opinion of the Ancient Church have ended in utter failure.

2. The Gospels do not wear the appearance of having been composed of legendary materials, put together by a number of collectors and editors. They read like the production of individual authors. Each Gospel has its own marked and striking characteristics, INDICATIVE OF AN INDIVIDUAL MIND.

3. The Gospels are represented by their authors as *remembered* by themselves, not as collected and received from others. See St. John ii. 22; xiv. 26; comp. St. John xii. 16, xv. 20, xvi. 4; St. Luke xxiv. 6; Acts xi. 16; 2 St. Peter i. 16; Gal. i. 11, 12. The recollection by the Twelve Apostles did not include all things said and done by our Lord, but it did include (*a*) the events that were cardinal points in the Redeemer's life and career; (*b*) those miracles that were connected with these events, and (*c*) the most important of His discourses. In selecting, digesting, and arranging the materials, the four Evangelists who acted for "the Twelve" were under the inspiration of the same Holy Spirit who had been promised to the Apostles collectively by their Divine Lord (St. John xiv. 26). This Spirit does not make *facsimiles*.

4. The origin of the Gospels is not to be explained by the Church, but the origin of the Church by the Gospels. The preaching of the Apostles made the first Christian brotherhood; they could not, therefore, have obtained the matter of their preaching from the brotherhood. It is in the highest degree improbable that those twelve divinely inspired and

authorised Apostles, upon whose accurate account of Jesus of Nazareth the founding, progress, and perpetuity of the Christian religion, and the eternal salvation of vast multitudes of human beings, absolutely depended, would have left that account to be prepared at haphazard by their converts, who not only had no inspiration or authority for the work, but who had not "companied" with Christ in the days of His flesh, and could not therefore draw from their recollections, and who as imperfectly sanctified Christians were full of ignorance, and liable to misconception, both of Christ and Christianity.

. . . . . .

6. The composition of the Gospels would naturally have been prior to that of the Epistles, because they were more needed in founding and extending the Christian Church among the nations. The first Christian brotherhood would have needed the Synoptist's account of the life of Christ more than it would St. Paul's abstruse and analytical enunciation of the Christian system in his Epistle to the Romans. But the date of the Epistle is generally fixed as A.D. 58. It was plainly important that the Gospels should be composed before the death of the Apostles should make it impossible. The Apostles would naturally provide for the necessities of the Church after their departure. Dr. Shedd thinks it is certain that the Apostolic College, by the instrumentality of a part of their number, prepared that threefold synoptical account of our Lord which for nearly twenty centuries has been ascribed to Matthew, Mark-Peter, and Luke-Paul. Eusebius dates Matthew's Gospel, A.D. 41.

The unproven assumptions and almost innumerable hypotheses which have characterised German schools of Biblical criticism since the time of Semler, are due to the substitution of the ecclesiastical origin of the Gospels for the Apostolic. There is indeed a difference in spirit and intention between the rationalistic and the evangelical critics who adopt this theory; but the fatal error of deriving the life of Christ from unauthorised, uninspired, and largely unknown sources, cleaves to both alike, so that the actual influence of the "evangelical" critic of this class is unsettling upon the belief of the Church, though less so than that of the rationalist. There will be no improvement in this class of exegetes until there is a return to the Apostolical origin of the Gospels.[1]

Let us next consider for a moment, somewhat more in detail, what the improbabilities are which the "unproven assumptions and almost innumerable hypotheses" here alluded to involve.

I will enumerate some of the most obvious of them.

1. It was improbable that the Apostles should neglect a means of carrying on their work which the most ordinary prudence and common sense would have suggested. They were pitting a new religion against established beliefs. They

[1] *The Thinker* (Sept. 1893), from an article by Dr. W. G. T. Shedd, New York.

were the only witnesses on whose testimony the fundamental facts and teaching of this religion rested. *Mere second-hand testimony, especially in distant countries, would have been ridiculously inadequate to produce conviction.* Thus some means of stating and verifying their own testimony would, according to all human experience, have been a necessity of their position.

2. It was improbable that the Apostles should have made use of written documents, as we know from the Acts they did, in minor matters, and yet should have neglected to make use of them in matters of incomparably greater importance. *Thus, apart from proof of the fact, there is no more reason to assume that they abstained from the natural use of their pens than that they abstained from the use of their hands and eyes.*

3. It was improbable that the Apostles should be insensible to the fact that the evidential value of historical records would necessarily be proportioned to the length of time which elapsed between the happening of the events and the records of such events being written.

4. It was improbable that the Apostles should have neglected to prepare written records, when the need of them must have been of the most urgent character, and yet have prepared them when the urgency of such need had long passed away. Had their work of evangelisation been limited to the country in which the main events of our Lord's life were matters of notoriety, the common explanation of their supposed delay in writing might be admissible. But it was not so limited. Nor would the explanation apply at all to the all-important and comparatively private teaching recorded by St. John.

5. It was improbable that, if any exceptional, and under the circumstances unnatural, means of equipping catechists to represent the Apostles was resorted to, no single reference to such means should be found throughout the whole of the New Testament. If nearly all extra-Judæan teaching had depended upon the memory of catechists, some allusion to the exercise and cultivation of such a qualification would have been inevitable.[1]

[1] In Mr. Wright's *The Composition of the Gospels*, it is assumed that the labour of learning Gospel narratives by heart was so great, that not even St. Paul or St. Barnabas were personally qualified to act as catechists (p. 16).

6. It was improbable that, if sufficient authoritative records of all that Jesus did and taught were not in existence, St. Paul and other New Testament writers would have systematically refrained from reciting some, at least, of the facts on which their arguments altogether depended.

7. It was improbable that, if no recognised means of acquiring a full knowledge of all that Jesus had done and taught existed, St. Paul would have systematically insisted upon his converts being "filled with a knowledge of His will," and yet have afforded them no means of knowing what that will was.

8. It was improbable that the Acts of the Apostles should have represented a history of the operations of the Holy Spirit, and that St. Paul's Epistles should so largely turn upon the influences of the same Spirit, and yet that our Lord's teaching on the subject of the Holy Spirit, as recorded by St. John, should not have been in existence. Without a full knowledge of such teaching, the Acts and the Epistles would be alike unintelligible. In this case, at least, the writers of the Acts and of the Epistles would have been bound to give at least some summary of St. John's teaching.

9. It was improbable that the Gospels, if they were produced at a late date and at different places, and were unsanctioned by any central authority, should have been accepted without controversy in all the Churches.

Their establishment side by side by Apostolic authority would have been simple enough, if brought about, as Tertullian asserts, when the various Churches were first founded. But later on, when jealousy and party feeling were rife, no cause adequate to produce such a result can even be suggested.

10. It was improbable that, if the Gospels were not established "from the beginning," early Christian writers should have quoted and relied upon them as they do, and yet never have betrayed the smallest consciousness of their authority having ever been a subject of dispute. Had they been of late date, they could not have achieved the position to which they attained without controversy, and that early Christian literature must have shown traces of such controversy.

Whatever may be said to any of these considerations taken

singly, it is certain that collectively they represent a mass of improbabilities, *i.e.* of effects without apparent causes—the acceptance of which, save on the most overwhelming evidence, would imply a credulity as grotesque as it would be degrading.

On what evidence then does the present universal acceptance of these improbabilities rest?

It rests, I submit, not on evidence at all, but on a single assumption, which, if correct, would naturally and necessarily stand in place of it.

We have simply taken for granted that what may be termed the Synoptic theory of the origin of the Gospels is beyond all question correct.

A representative theologian (the Rev. G. H. Gwilliam, B.D., Fellow of Hertford College, Oxford) writes:—

"*We have been taught*, and have subsequently studied and taught, from the standpoint, *which we have assumed to be the one alone tenable*, that the Gospels are to be divided into the *three* and *the one*—the three Synoptists being in some way related to one another (and here the theories have been many and conflicting) and the one, St. John, the supplement of the three" (*Expository Times*, April 1892, p. 313).

The whole case could not be more concisely or correctly stated.

The Synoptic theory is simply an assumption based upon traditional teaching which has come down to us from a time when it was a matter of perfect indifference whether facts were explained naturally or supernaturally.

Speaking of the views embodied in the foregoing pages, Mr. Gwilliam says:—

"If there be no real *à priori* objection to such an interrelation of the four sacred writers as Mr. Halcombe proposes, then it must be admitted that *a very good case has been made out for reversing the ordinary view of commentators.*"

Since this opinion was given, the editor of a leading critical journal—*The Expository Times*—has written an article for the especial purpose of proving that the Synoptic theory was manifestly "a shortsighted and disastrous mistake," whilst two other responsible critics have emphatically endorsed, and given at length their reasons for endorsing, the view of the case which Mr. Gwilliam had adopted.

The whole case is manifestly one in which the opinion of

a single responsible critic, who has taken the trouble to go into the evidence, may well outweigh the opinions of a whole theatre of others who have confessedly been unable to overcome the first prejudices of a not unnatural incredulity.

But for all practical purposes we may say that the matter has been reported on by four independent and competent referees, and that the decision arrived at has been practically unanimous.

Up to the present time, in spite of these opinions and the amount of attention which they have attracted, and in spite also of the extent to which the whole Synoptic theory strikes at the root of the authority and evidential value of the Gospels, only one critic (the Rev. A. Wright, Fellow of Queen's College, Cambridge) has been found to make the smallest attempt to plead either in favour of the theory, or against the indictment by which it has been challenged.

It can hardly be an accident that in three separate articles Mr. Wright never makes the remotest allusion to the contention that the evidential facts supplied by all four Gospels certainly can, and therefore certainly ought to be included in the same inquiry and analysis. This was the one question at issue.

If only from the wholly unprovoked bitterness and personal discourtesy of Mr. Wright's articles, there is no room to doubt that if he could have advanced any arguments against this contention, he certainly would have done so.

Mr. Wright's summary of the case affords a striking illustration of the logical chaos into which the conflicting claims of evidence and prejudice may throw even an accomplished disputant. He says:—

"It is easy to construct a system. If you carefully analyse and arrange the facts, leaving nothing out of consideration and exaggerating nothing, it will be impossible to refute you. The question is whether your system is natural, self-evident, and capable of asserting its own truth, or a mass of improbabilities strung together in defiance of law and habit and ascertained fact."

Mr. Wright might be quoting a *bon mot* culled from the answers of some luckless examinee.

How can there be any "ascertained facts" which an

analysis, which "leaves out nothing," does not include? And how, if such facts be included in the analysis, can it be "impossible to refute" the view which the analysis gives of them?

Again, how can any one seriously contend that in such a case as the present, the final appeal lies, not to analysis, but to what this or that person may regard as the probabilities of the case?

Clearly, if the first part of Mr. Wright's verdict be correct, the difficulties which he suggests in the way of its acceptance must be purely imaginary. At the same time, they are doubtless difficulties which any one first studying the subject from an entirely fresh point of view might well feel.

I will therefore put them before the reader in the simplest possible form as objection and answer.

Objection 1. Though modern critics "are numerous, and hold widely different views," the system proposed "groups them together, and condemns them without distinction."

*Answer.* As universally held by all modern critics the Synoptic theory, however little intended as such, is unquestionably in the nature of an accusation against the authority of the Gospels.

But from time immemorial, when the witness of accusers has not agreed together, the natural presumption has been held to be, *not* that one of them must be correct, but that all must be incorrect.

Objection 2. The Synoptists certainly contradict each other in the matter of chronological arrangement. "The question is fundamental."

*Answer.* If the Gospels had a publisher behind them, and if Mr. Wright made the statements which he does, and at the same time wholly ignored the real facts of the case as given by Professor Birks (see p. 23), his statements would certainly recoil on his own head in the shape of the heaviest damages which an indignant jury could award.

Objection 3. If the "constructive principles" which the analysis would seem to establish require that an Evangelist should have written "in a way in which no man has ever written before or since," we are entitled to suppose that the "constructive principles" are certainly wrong.

*Answer.* If the analysis does not really establish the "constructive principles," it must be possible to show how and where it fails to do so.

But apart from this Mr. Wright forgets two facts—

(*a*) That when the unusual is of perpetual recurrence—and that it is so in the present case is abundantly proved—the more unusual it is the more certain it becomes, that it must be the result of design; and—

(*b*) That inasmuch as all the Gospel phenomena are intensely abnormal, to seek the explanation of such abnormal effects in anything like normal causes must be a mere midsummer madness.

Objection 4. That the comparison of certain narratives in the Gospels makes the idea of anything like a close adjustment of the Gospels wholly untenable.

*Answer.* Even as compared with any single branch of evidence, the area of investigation thus relied on is infinitesimally small. At the same time, the question whether the Evangelists had or not seen each other's writings is itself one of the main points at issue. Until this point has been decided the narratives in question cannot even be intelligently discussed.

Thus the area of investigation relied upon is not only hopelessly inadequate in itself, but is just the very one which ought in the first instance to be kept as much as possible in the background.

Objection 5. The system implies that Inspiration "sets aside the laws of human thought."

*Answer.* The system merely represents an exceptionally wise and effective method of narration. Whilst all that the carrying out of such a system required, was full knowledge, extreme accuracy, and absolute truthfulness.

Any one who believes in Inspiration at all, may well believe that so perfect a result as the evidence sets before us may well be due to its influence.

But the system, or, more correctly speaking, the evidence, does not in any other way presuppose Inspiration. It may to many minds suggest it; to some it may seem to prove it; but even so the effect would be, not to "set aside," but so to regulate "the laws of human thought" as to bring them into

an unusually perfect harmony with what we may conceive of the laws of Divine thought.

Mr. Wright himself says:—

"The theory of Inspiration which underlies the views advocated in this paper may seem to some people subversive of belief."

No one would contradict this statement. But the real difficulty seems to me to know what Mr. Wright can possibly mean by Inspiration. An excess of accuracy seems to him just as incompatible with it as what he holds to be an excess of inaccuracy is compatible with it.

But we must turn for a moment to the side of the question with which by far the greater part of Mr. Wright's articles are directed, viz. his own view of a particular aspect of the Synoptic theory.

Mr. Wright contends—

1. That St. Mark's Gospel was the basis of the Gospels of St. Matthew and St. Luke.

2. That St. Mark obtained his facts from St. Peter, but did not write them down till about forty years after he had been taught them.

3. That from the length of time during which his Gospel thus existed in an oral form, it underwent very considerable modifications. "The story was not merely told, but learnt by heart, and frequently repeated."

4. That the Eastern and Western catechists "started with St. Mark's version of St. Peter's memoirs (except that St. Luke received about two-thirds of it only), and grafted into it such additional records as they from time to time obtained from St. Matthew or other sources. Both of them unconsciously and gradually altered St. Mark's teaching, not only by reducing its bulk, but by modifying its statements."

5. Mr. Wright "cannot doubt that St. Matthew would have given much to include in his Gospel the Parable of the Prodigal Son, or that St. Luke would have given still more for the history of the Syrophœnician woman's daughter. . . . He did not give it, because he had never heard of it. It

belongs to the *last stage of St. Peter's memoirs, which never reached the West till the Gospels were written.*"

With all the realistic details as to the effects of committing long passages to memory, the supposed action of catechists, the "shrinkage" of St. Peter's original teaching, and the way in which a semi-amalgamation between the Synoptic Gospels was finally effected, I need not trouble the reader.

If the gravity of the subject did not forbid such an idea, we might suppose that Mr. Wright was merely preparing to turn round upon his readers, and to say that, had they possessed the very smallest sense of humour, they must have known that his whole conception of the case was merely intended as a sort of theological rival to *Alice in Wonderland* and that its sole object was to show the absurdities into which a reliance upon a purely imaginative sense of fact would betray us, and so to give the *coup de grâce* to the already moribund theory of tradition.

But if to put forward such views as a jest would be inadmissible, how far more so to promulgate them seriously!

They cannot do otherwise than deal blows to the Gospels, the effect of which must be to leave them in the eyes of many wounded and half-dead.

Yet three things are certain—

1. Such views rest on no sort of evidence.

2. They are absolutely inconsistent with any one of the various branches of evidence which they ought to satisfy; and

3. No single sample of Gospel construction ever has been or ever could be found which they could possibly be made to account for.

For eighteen centuries the Gospels have stood fast like the mountains. Can any one seriously think that their time-honoured title to our reverend and unqualified acceptance can ever be really endangered by any claimant Gospel of which the above is counted as a favourable specimen?

# APPENDICES

## I

### Analysis of Incidents in Sectional Histories

| | ST. JOHN | | ST. MATTHEW | | ST MARK | | ST. LUKE | | Common to all Four Gospels | John and Matt. only | John and Mark only | John and Luke only | John, Matt. Mark only | John, Matt. Luke only | John, Mark, Luke only | Matt. Mark, Luke only | Matt. and Mark only | Matt. and Luke only | Mark and Luke only |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | No. | Peculiar | No. | Fresh | No. | Fresh | No. | Fresh | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Section I. | 0 | 0 | 15 | 15 | ... | ... | 11 | 11 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| „ II. | 2 | 2 | 6 | 6 | 5 | 0 | 8 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| „ III. | 25 | 22 | 39 | 36 | 39 | 7 | 52 | 14 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 24 | 5 | 7 | 5 |
| „ IV. | 3 | 3 | 19 | 19 | 19 | 2 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 12 | 0 | 0 |
| „ V. | 1 | 1 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| „ VI. | 23 | 23 | 11 | 11 | 10 | 2 | 23 | 16 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 1 |
| „ VII. | 5 | 3 | 13 | 11 | 18 | 5 | 11 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 8 | 3 | 0 | 2 |
| „ VIII. | 5 | 5 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 0 | 8 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| „ IX. | 4 | 1 | 8 | 7 | 9 | 1 | 5 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| „ X. | 8 | 3 | 13 | 8 | 13 | 0 | 10 | 2 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| „ XI. | 19 | 12 | 15 | 9 | 12 | 0 | 15 | 7 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| „ XII. | 11 | 5 | 20 | 14 | 17 | 0 | 19 | 7 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 7 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| „ XIII. | 8 | 5 | 5 | 2 | 6 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| „ XIV. | 14 | 7 | 14 | 12 | 14 | 8 | 15 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 6 |
| Totals . . . | 128 | 92 | 188 | 160 | 171 | 26 | 188 | 67 | 23 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 4 | 0 | 1 | 69 | 46 | 10 | 14 |

II

## Analysis of Details in Fourfold Narratives

| | ST. JOHN | | ST. MATTHEW | | ST. MARK | | ST. LUKE | | Common to all Four Gospels | John and Matt. only | John and Mark only | John and Luke only | John, Matt. Mark only | John, Matt. Luke only | John, Mark Luke only | Matt. Mark Luke only | Matt. and Mark only | Matt. and Luke only | Mark and Luke only |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | No. | Peculiar | No. | Fresh | No. | Fresh | No. | Fresh | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Narrative I. | 47 | 39 | 54 | 35 | 77 | 29 | 52 | 25 | 13 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 10 | 19 | 1 | 3 |
| „ II. | 34 | 26 | 36 | 28 | 31 | 16 | 42 | 24 | 2 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 13 | 3 | 0 | 3 |
| „ III. | 29 | 25 | 44 | 41 | 36 | 15 | 26 | 15 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 10 | 10 | 0 | 0 |
| „ IV. | 51 | 44 | 42 | 42 | 43 | 19 | 40 | 29 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 7 | 17 | 0 | 4 |
| „ V. | 52 | 49 | 17 | 14 | 11 | 4 | 9 | 6 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| „ VI. | 65 | 53 | 59 | 54 | 41 | 5 | 46 | 29 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 10 | 16 | 0 | 2 |
| „ VII. | 21 | 18 | 4 | 1 | 5 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| „ VIII. | 23 | 20 | 7 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| „ IX. | 23 | 13 | 18 | 10 | 26 | 16 | 17 | 6 | 5 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 4 |
| „ X. | 271 | 253 | 89 | 89 | 94 | 78 | 239 | 216 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 11 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 9 | 0 | 7 |
| Totals . . . | 616 | 540 | 370 | 318 | 369 | 185 | 477 | 350 | 29 | 12 | 4 | 20 | 16 | 0 | 7 | 51 | 82 | 1 | 24 |

III

## Analysis of Facts and Details in Fourfold Statements

| | St. John | | St. Matthew | | St. Mark | | St Luke | | Common to Four Gospels | John and Matt. only | John and Mark only | John and Luke only | John, Matt. Mark, only | John, Matt. Luke only | John, Mark, Luke only | Matt. Mark, Luke only | Matt. and Mark only | Matt. and Luke only | Mark and Luke only |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | No. | Peculiar | No. | Fresh | No. | Fresh | No. | Fresh | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Statement I. | 5 | 3 | 9 | 7 | 12 | 7 | 7 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 1 | 1 |
| „ II. | 13 | 13 | 14 | 14 | 15 | 4 | 13 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 10 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| „ III. | 6 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 10 | 7 | 7 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| „ IV. | 4 | 1 | 6 | 4 | 7 | 4 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| „ V. | 7 | 4 | 11 | 8 | 10 | 0 | 8 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| „ VI. | 15 | 11 | 8 | 4 | 8 | 1 | 6 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| „ VII. | 6 | 4 | 22 | 20 | 22 | 10 | 19 | 4 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 10 | 2 | 0 | 5 |
| „ VIII. | 8 | 6 | 4 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 6 | 5 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| „ IX. | 7 | 4 | 7 | 4 | 7 | 2 | 5 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| „ X. | 3 | 3 | 12 | 12 | 12 | 1 | 6 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 10 | 0 | 0 |
| „ XI. | 10 | 5 | 24 | 20 | 14 | 2 | 21 | 10 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 8 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| „ XII. | 4 | 4 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 1 | 25 | 21 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| „ XIII. | 25 | 25 | 6 | 6 | 4 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| „ XIV. | 4 | 4 | 6 | 6 | 8 | 4 | 8 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| „ XV. | 14 | 12 | 8 | 6 | 10 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| „ XVI. | 3 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 7 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Totals . . . | 134 | 104 | 152 | 124 | 143 | 49 | 148 | 67 | 10 | 6 | 1 | 2 | 7 | 4 | 0 | 46 | 31 | 3 | 9 |

## IV

### Verbal Analysis of Sectional Histories

| | ST. JOHN | | ST. MATTHEW | | ST. MARK | | ST. LUKE | | In Four Gospels | John and Matt. only | John and Mark only | John and Luke only | John, Matt. Mark only | John, Matt. Luke only | John, Mark, Luke only | Matt. Mark, Luke only | Matt. and Mark only | Matt. and Luke only | Mark and Luke only |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Words | Only in John | Words | Fresh | Words | Fresh | Words | Fresh | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Section I. | 188 | 188 | 904 | 904 | ... | ... | 2067 | 2067 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| „ II. | 345 | 292 | 518 | 476 | 216 | 44 | 815 | 639 | 35 | 4 | 0 | 6 | 3 | 0 | 5 | 79 | 50 | 42 | 14 |
| „ III. | 3547 | 3487 | 7325 | 7276 | 3971 | 2383 | 6861 | 4255 | 16 | 2 | 11 | 0 | 27 | 4 | 0 | 846 | 687 | 1212 | 528 |
| „ IV. | 970 | 970 | 1508 | 1508 | 1902 | 1198 | 568 | 213 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 230 | 474 | 58 | 67 |
| „ V. | 160 | 160 | 798 | 798 | 350 | 223 | 100 | 17 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 45 | 82 | 2 | 36 |
| „ VI. | 4117 | 4117 | 1133 | 1133 | 910 | 425 | 5070 | 4751 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 225 | 260 | 12 | 82 |
| „ VII. | 952 | 888 | 4058 | 4006 | 2359 | 1180 | 1721 | 844 | 6 | 15 | 10 | 2 | 31 | 0 | 0 | 623 | 509 | 50 | 196 |
| „ VIII. | 1261 | 1247 | 241 | 227 | 264 | 96 | 521 | 400 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 74 | 80 | 3 | 40 |
| „ IX. | 1815 | 1786 | 487 | 461 | 425 | 122 | 245 | 130 | 10 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 8 | 3 | 0 | 81 | 203 | 15 | 4 |
| „ X. | 306 | 265 | 476 | 446 | 380 | 140 | 290 | 151 | 16 | 2 | 2 | 9 | 11 | 1 | 0 | 81 | 130 | 15 | 17 |
| „ XI. | 594 | 512 | 339 | 280 | 243 | 43 | 372 | 257 | 30 | 10 | 9 | 13 | 19 | 0 | 1 | 52 | 89 | 5 | 14 |
| „ XII. | 291 | 252 | 384 | 348 | 320 | 84 | 383 | 266 | 21 | 6 | 0 | 1 | 9 | 0 | 2 | 78 | 126 | 4 | 11 |
| „ XIII. | 233 | 214 | 78 | 65 | 100 | 39 | 103 | 58 | 10 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 20 | 23 | 2 | 11 |
| „ XIV. | 1123 | 1105 | 429 | 421 | 303 | 235 | 837 | 779 | 8 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 26 | 26 | 6 | 10 |
| Totals . . | 15,902 | 15,483 | 18,678 | 18,349 | 11,743 | 6212 | 19,953 | 14,827 | 156 | 45 | 39 | 35 | 120 | 8 | 16 | 2460 | 2739 | 1426 | 1030 |

## V

### Verbal Analysis of Fourfold Narratives

| | ST. JOHN | | ST. MATTHEW | | ST. MARK | | ST. LUKE | | Common to Four Gospels | Common to John and Matthew | Common to John and Mark | Common to John and Luke | Common to John, Matthew, and Mark | Common to John, Matthew, and Luke | Common to John, Mark, and Luke | Common to Matthew, Mark, and Luke | Common to Matthew and Mark | Common to Matthew and Luke | Common to Mark and Luke |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Words | Only in John | Words | Fresh | Words | Fresh | Words | Fresh | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Narrative I. | 322 | 269 | 367 | 321 | 406 | 234 | 167 | 62 | 15 | 1 | 7 | 0 | 26 | 4 | 0 | 52 | 72 | 18 | 6 |
| „ II. | 187 | 150 | 191 | 158 | 173 | 78 | 263 | 205 | 6 | 16 | 0 | 3 | 11 | 0 | 1 | 41 | 36 | 2 | 5 |
| „ III. | 179 | 152 | 192 | 168 | 151 | 53 | 130 | 62 | 10 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 8 | 3 | 0 | 39 | 40 | 11 | 3 |
| „ IV. | 216 | 201 | 168 | 158 | 177 | 75 | 144 | 79 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 34 | 58 | 7 | 10 |
| „ V. | 236 | 211 | 88 | 70 | 70 | 14 | 209 | 151 | 16 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 20 | 16 | 7 | 8 |
| „ VI. | 334 | 292 | 277 | 252 | 195 | 76 | 177 | 130 | 8 | 4 | 10 | 7 | 13 | 0 | 0 | 22 | 66 | 4 | 6 |
| „ VII. | 62 | 46 | 28 | 11 | 15 | 3 | 7 | 0 | 5 | 12 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| „ VIII. | 74 | 66 | 17 | 9 | 12 | 0 | 13 | 2 | 4 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 5 | 4 | 0 | 2 |
| „ IX. | 113 | 102 | 76 | 66 | 91 | 41 | 95 | 53 | 10 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 19 | 20 | 2 | 11 |
| „ X. | 1180 | 1137 | 341 | 332 | 303 | 243 | 845 | 790 | 8 | 0 | 5 | 14 | 0 | 1 | 5 | 13 | 29 | 5 | 10 |
| Totals . . | 2903 | 2626 | 1745 | 1545 | 1593 | 817 | 2050 | 1534 | 92 | 38 | 24 | 35 | 61 | 9 | 8 | 252 | 341 | 56 | 61 |

## VI

### Verbal Analysis of Fourfold Statements

| | ST. JOHN | | ST. MATTHEW | | ST. MARK | | ST. LUKE | | Common to Four Gospels | Common to John and Matthew | Common to John and Mark | Common to John and Luke | Common to John, Matthew, and Mark | Common to John, Matthew, and Luke | Common to John, Mark, and Luke | Common to Matthew, Mark, and Luke | Common to Matthew and Mark | Common to Matthew and Luke | Common to Mark and Luke |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Words | Only in John | Words | Fresh | Words | Fresh | Words | Fresh | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Statement I. | 27 | 21 | 21 | 16 | 39 | 14 | 22 | 10 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 11 | 6 | 1 |
| „ II. | 84 | 67 | 69 | 46 | 74 | 23 | 66 | 25 | 8 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 23 | 9 | 6 | 4 |
| „ III. | 22 | 14 | 8 | 3 | 20 | 13 | 18 | 11 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 2 | 2 |
| „ IV. | 8 | 4 | 11 | 7 | 17 | 11 | 5 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| „ V. | 18 | 15 | 25 | 22 | 30 | 11 | 22 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 14 | 0 | 2 | 1 |
| „ VI. | 32 | 28 | 14 | 11 | 15 | 5 | 13 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 6 | 1 | 2 | 0 |
| „ VII. | 48 | 38 | 95 | 84 | 105 | 58 | 89 | 38 | 0 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 30 | 14 | 4 | 17 |
| „ VIII. | 40 | 40 | 18 | 18 | 16 | 4 | 21 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 7 | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| „ IX. | 23 | 16 | 22 | 15 | 21 | 2 | 11 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 12 | 1 | 1 |
| „ X. | 9 | 5 | 35 | 31 | 27 | 6 | 17 | 11 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 19 | 4 | 0 |
| „ XI. | 49 | 29 | 120 | 65 | 75 | 25 | 93 | 48 | 9 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 26 | 14 | 6 | 1 |
| „ XII. | 27 | 22 | 28 | 13 | 23 | 8 | 108 | 105 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 11 | 1 | 1 |
| „ XIII. | 141 | 134 | 25 | 18 | 18 | 4 | 41 | 23 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| „ XIV. | 6 | 4 | 14 | 12 | 19 | 8 | 19 | 8 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 4 | 0 | 3 |
| „ XV. | 64 | 55 | 37 | 31 | 43 | 13 | 18 | 5 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 8 | 17 | 2 | 2 |
| „ XVI. | 16 | 14 | 10 | 8 | 7 | 0 | 19 | 12 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Totals . . | 614 | 506 | 552 | 400 | 549 | 205 | 582 | 310 | 41 | 24 | 8 | 3 | 18 | 10 | 0 | 142 | 122 | 39 | 36 |

## VII

## PAPIAS

Eusebius speaks of Papias as a contemporary of Polycarp, "an intimate disciple of the Apostles." He also mentions him with, but before, Ignatius. The tradition that the title Theophoros was given to Ignatius in memory of his being the child set by our Lord in the midst of the Apostles, necessarily leads to the inference that Papias must have been born about the year 30.

Bishop Lightfoot claims to have proved that Papias' *Exegesis of the Dominical Oracles* was certainly a commentary on the four Gospels, and that it must have been written some forty years after the Gospel Canon was completed. (*Essays on Supernatural Religion*, chap. v.)

If the Canon was completed by St. Luke in the middle of the first century, we can accept, not only the literal meaning of the following extract from Papias' Preface to his work, but also the above evidence as to the date of his birth.

"But I will not scruple also to give a place for you along with my interpretations to everything that I learnt carefully and remembered carefully in time past from the Apostles (Elders), guaranteeing their truth. For, unlike the many, I did not take pleasure in those who have so very much to say, but in those who teach the truth; nor in those who relate foreign commandments, but such as were given by the Lord to the Faith, and are derived from the Truth itself. And again, on any occasion when a person came in my way who had been a follower of the Apostles (Elders), I would inquire about the discourses of the Apostles (Elders)—what was said by Andrew, or by Peter, or by Philip, or by Thomas or James, or by John or Matthew, or any other of the Lord's disciples, and what Aristion and the Apostle (Elder) John, the disciples of the Lord, say. For I did not think that I could get so much profit from the contents of books as from the utterances of a living and abiding voice" (Eusebius, *E. H.* iii. 39).

From this we learn that even in the lifetime of the above-named Apostles the Gospels were old enough to be a subject of general inquiry.

## VIII

## TERTULLIAN

The concessions of an opponent have always a special value.

The Rev. A. Wright having constantly lectured on Tertullian, is able to assert with confidence—(*a*) that at Rome St. John's and St. Matthew's Gospels had been placed first, "from the day when the Gospels had first been bound into one volume"; and (*b*) that Tertullian's arguments prove a prevailing and decided conviction that this was "the true order." (*Expository Times*, May 1893, p. 360.)

A reference to the Fourth Book of Tertullian's treatise *Against Marcion* (chaps. ii.–vii.) will at once show the extent to which this view of the case is true.

Tertullian treats the priority of the Apostolic Gospels as a universally recognised axiom, saying of it, "*constituimus imprimis.*"

He speaks of THE GENUINE TEXT OF THE APOSTOLIC WRITINGS as "the enlightener of Paul, and by his means of Luke also."

He quotes expressions in St. Paul's Epistles as manifestly intended to apply to the Apostolic Gospels. Nor does he hesitate to urge as an undeniable fact that Marcion's Gospel was so much later than the Apostolic Gospels that there had intervened between them "documents of the Christian religion," presumably the rest of the New Testament, "WHICH HAD BEEN PUBLISHED FOR A HUNDRED YEARS."

Again, blaming Marcion for not attacking the Apostolic Gospels rather than St. Luke's Gospel, he says:—

"For he altogether ignores them and takes his stand on Luke in preference to them, as though they had not been received by the Churches from the beginning (*a primordio*) just as much as Luke's Gospel. As a matter of fact, it is even more credible that these Gospels existed from the very foundation of the Churches; for their priority is implied, not only by their being the work of Apostles, but from their forming a part of the dedication of the very Churches themselves (*cum ipsis ecclesiis dedicata*)."

Bishop Westcott, speaking generally of the value of Tertullian's evidence, says: "His testimony is the judgment of his Church; an inheritance, not a deduction" (*C. N. T.* p. 312).

Yet in spite of its overwhelming importance the above evidence has been wholly ignored; so much so that the only reference to it prior to Mr. Wright's is a brief remark by Dr. Scrivener in the notes to his Codex Bezæ, where he says: "Christian Hermansen, the Dane, cites Tertullian as following *ordinem a vulgari alienum* of the Gospels."

So far afield is he obliged to go to find even a bare reference to this testimony.

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